

The rhymes they are a-changin'



'I was once asked what had most influenced me politically, and I answered growing up in the 1960s. I think we are now beginning to rediscover a little bit of that'

Chris Smith (left)

Fade far away, dissolve... to Dylan

Dan Glaister on a cultural conundrum



John Keats, painted by Joseph Severn in 1819... dense voluptuousness

Endymion

by John Keats
(1795-1821)

Who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit
would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright
mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet
if human souls did never kiss and greet?



Bob Dylan... tending to the surreal

Love Minus Zero/No Limit

by Bob Dylan
(1941-)

In the dime stores and bus stations,
People talk of situations,
Read books, repeat quotations,
Draw conclusions on the wall.
Some speak of the future,
My love she speaks softly,
She knows there's no success like failure
And that failure's no success at all.

IT WAS one of the great artistic questions of the late 1990s, defining the high culture versus low culture debate: does Bob Dylan stand comparison with John Keats?

On one side was the enigmatic one-time folk singer-songwriter turned protest singer, religious rocker and latterly eternal tourer, last year nominated for the Nobel prize for literature. On the other, the 19th century poet whose greatest hits included *Ode to Melancholy*, *To Psyche* and *Ode to Indolence*.

Now the Culture Secretary and Wordsworth scholar, Chris Smith, has stepped into the debate. In an interview published yesterday, he argued that Keats and Dylan should stand side by side. Asked if he thinks Dylan is as valid as Keats, he replies:

"Yes, I do believe that." Does Dylan measure up to Beethoven? "Beethoven and he are different," replies the Secretary of State. "You can't put them in a pecking order. I wouldn't want to establish hierarchies."

Nevertheless, hierarchies exist, with Dylan often placed near the top of the pile. Writer and critic Andrew Motion, whose biography of Keats was published at the end of last year, chose Dylan's *Love Minus Zero/No Limit* (the unplugged version, note) as one of his Desert Island Discs last week.

"It's trendy of Chris Smith to have picked up on it, but I really think the antithesis idea is a meaningless one. Dylan is as good at doing what Dylan does as Keats is at doing what Keats does. You must insist on their differ-

ences as well as what they have in common.

"There is perhaps some sympathy between the dense voluptuousness of Keats's work and a similar quality in early Dylan. In Dylan it tends to be more surreal. It's all to do with the idea that they are both creators whose work depends on the sense of them being young. They are both alive to their youth in what they say."

The academic and critic Sir Frank Kermode gained some notoriety in the 1960s when he compared Dylan to the great poets. Not content with Keats, Kermode brought in Mr Smith's favourite, Wordsworth, noting Dylan's "geometry of innocence".

Kermode, who did not previously know Dylan's work, particularly praised *Desolation Row*: "So much unreality

against the background of Desolation Row, the flat and dusty truth, the myth before the myth began."

Today, however, Kermode is tired with the comparison. "Those folk singers such as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan were interesting people at the time," he said.

"But I don't suppose Dylan will endure. I don't see any point in dragging them out and measuring them up like children measured against a kitchen wall."

The chief proponent of Dylan's claim to a place in the pantheon of poetry, rather than the rock'n'roll hall of fame, is another academic, Christopher Ricks. Last year he said: "The question is 'Does anyone use words better than Dylan does?' then the answer is no."

as "a great amuser, a great entertainer, who belongs with the artists who have looked for the widest possible constituency, like Dickens and Shakespeare".

Dickens, Shakespeare, Keats? Where can it end? Well, it doesn't. Michael Gray set the tone for all this back in 1973 when he published a book comparing Dylan to Lewis Carroll, Bunyan, Tolkien and Browning. The comparison from Chris Smith is merely the most recent mention in cultural dispatches for Dylan.

For playwright David Hare, who ignited the Dylan versus Keats debate some years ago when he argued on television that the poet had outperformed the singer and we should all stop being so silly, Smith's comments are indicative of the Government's cultural priorities.

"Self-evidently there is work which is popular and good, and when that happens everyone is happy."

"But there is also work which is good but not popular, and Chris Smith and this government should be putting

a little more enthusiasm and effort into protecting that kind of work because essentially the other kind of work can look after itself."

The explanation for Smith's invocation of Dylan rather than the normal heroes and heroines of Cool Britannia comes in another recent interview. "I was once asked what had most influenced me politically, and I answered growing up in the 1960s," he said.

"At that time there was an enormous sense of hope that it was possible to change the

world by democratic decision-making — and music and the arts were very much part of that sense of excitement. That got knocked out of us in the cynical 1970s and 1980s. I think we are now beginning to rediscover a little bit of that. Perhaps it is in a more mature and sober way, but the sense that we can make real changes is coming back."

And the Secretary of State's own musical favourite? Well, Dylan, naturally. But he also mentions Schubert, Mahler, Scott McKenzie, Queen, and, er, Robbie Williams.

Fashion fiasco slashes Next's value by £650m

Julia Finch

SOME £650 million was wiped off the value of the Next fashion empire yesterday as the stock chain said its profits were in decline as a result of stocking clothes that were too trendy for its customers.

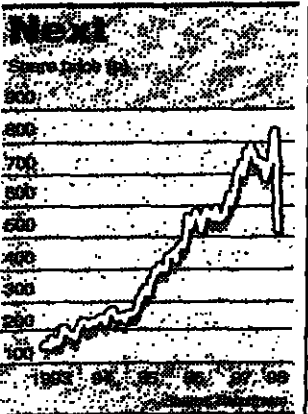
The company, which has 325 stores and nearly 1 million customers of its mail-order Directory, has lost sales after running out of classic fashion items such as tailored suits and knitwear.

It also admitted it ordered too much stock last autumn and had to put much more than usual in the January sale. And although its childrenswear range was popular, the company had not bought enough goods to meet demand. To compound its problems, high street spending was slowing down.

Next's shares fell by 25 per cent to 54p as the company revealed its miscalculations. It is now valued at just over £2 billion. In the first seven weeks of this year the group's sales fell by 15 per cent, at a time when Next had increased its floorspace by 12 per cent.

It is the first setback since Next plunged into losses and came close to collapse seven years ago.

Its chief executive, David Jones, who is widely credited with engineering the revival



in Next's fortunes throughout the 1990s, said the company had made a strategic mistake in focusing on high fashion. "In trying to move the range on we have ignored some of the core classics for which we are very well known."

The company's customers are mainly in the 25-45 age range, and Mr Jones said: "We have been left short of the type of merchandise which is bought by my wife and my secretary. We went too young and fashionable."

Next's problems left City investors "in deep shock", according to one analyst. Many said the company's value would fall further as yesterday's share slide would push it out of the UK's FT-SE 100 index of top companies and some shareholders would

automatically sell as a result.

In the first half of 1997, Next made a profit of £67 million and City analysts had expected better this year. But the stock-buying mistakes will mean the company makes £10 million less in the same period this year.

Mr Jones said it would take until October to rebalance the ranges. Cloth took up to 18 weeks to be delivered and manufacturing would take another 10 weeks, he said, even though half of Next's clothing is made in the Britain.

Next's problems were revealed as it said it made \$184 million profit last year — 18 per cent up on 1996.

Mr Jones insisted that the stock problem was a one-off error that would not be repeated. "We have made a mistake. But good managers don't turn into bad managers overnight and the Next brand is still strong."

However, retail analysts said the group's problems could be a sign that it was becoming as over-confident as it had in the 1980s.

Then, under the leadership of its flamboyant founder, George Davies, it expanded too fast and went to the brink of bankruptcy.

"This smacks of complacency," said one analyst. "Maybe they are believing their own PR and starting to think they could do no wrong."

New venue for MEPs' battle over World Cup tickets

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

THIS battle to win extra tickets for Euros fans in this summer's World Cup started in Paris, shifted to Brussels, but yesterday centred on the unlikely spot of Stoke-on-Trent — with a Labour MEP seeking an injunction against the organisers to force them to sell more tickets to non-French fans.

Michael Tappin, MEP for Staffordshire West and Congleton, is part of a group of 25 European Socialist Group MEPs who have vowed to take legal action against the French organisers for favouring French nationals in distributing tickets for the tournament, which starts in June.

The MEPs have been advised that they must start the process in their own constituencies, and the first battle is set to be fought at Stoke county court in the next few days, says Mr Tappin.

On Monday, the European Commission launched formal legal proceedings after final negotiations with the Comité Français d'Organisation (CFO) ended in deadlock over the distribution of 160,000 World Cup tickets which it had held in reserve.

"Ordinary people are being denied tickets under completely unfair rules," said Mr Tappin. "This is totally against the single market."

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Gianluca Vialli has not only continued with the selection revolving door in which so many forward's egos, including his own, have become trapped; he has installed another.

Roy Collins on who will be in goal for Chelsea on Sunday

Sport98 page 4

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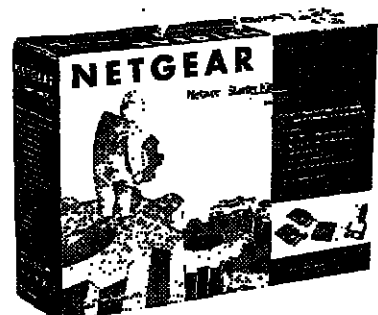
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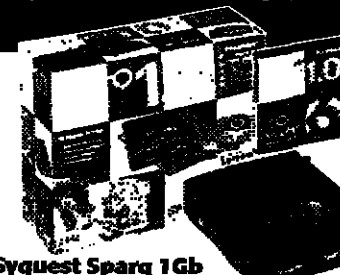
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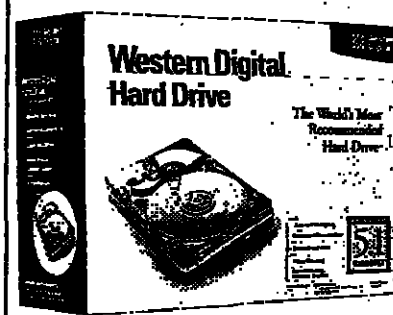
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College master derides 'cool Britannia' approach



'Oxford is clearly not part of cool Britannia,' says the Master of Pembroke College, shown above. PHOTOGRAPH GARRY JESSOP

Oxford disowns academic's stinging attack on funding cuts

Vivek Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

OXFORD university moved yesterday to distance itself from a senior academic who claimed that the Government was destroying the university because it did not fit in with the image of "cool" Britannia. Robert Stevens, Master of Pembroke College, also attacked the Government for showing that he said was hostility towards Oxford and Cambridge because it wanted to show itself against elitism.

Speaking in the United States to the Association of University Administrators, Dr Stevens said: "At some level of consciousness, perhaps the British have decided that being no longer a world power, world class universities are an embarrassment. Oxford is clearly not part of cool Britannia."

Dr Stevens also said he feared that Oxford would not survive under a Labour government. His comments will further increase tension between the Government and Oxford and Cambridge, which recently had their funding procedures amended by the Government to bring them in

line with other universities. A spokeswoman for Oxford said yesterday that Dr Stevens' views did not reflect those of the institution. She said: "There are concerns about a number of issues. But these are the views of Dr Stevens and this is certainly not the view of the university. What he's saying is not necessarily something that's a widely held view here."

Dr Stevens, a former professor of law at Yale, also criticised the Government for preventing colleges from charging extra fees. He added: "The loss of the right to charge fees means not only the loss of independence... but that Oxford, although remaining the best of England's universities, will not be playing the world league."

"Oxford is already hanging on by its fingertips in claiming to be an international university." Last week, the Government announced a change in funding for Oxford and Cambridge which could see the pair lose £12 million over the next decade in subsidies for their undergraduate tutorial system. Both universities were also told that they will be expected to make larger "efficiency savings" than other universities.

The Department of Education yesterday declined to comment on Dr Stevens' remarks, but said that the new funding arrangements reflected the Government's determination to safeguard

excellence at Oxford and Cambridge.

Dr Stevens also claimed that Oxford had suffered in the wave of cool Britannia because of its image as a haven for wealthy, upper class students.

He said that the image was overwhelmingly of "under-graduates wearing white ties and dancing until dawn... in the meantime sniffing some controlled substance... but the truth is very different."

Josh Bell, head of the students' union at Oriel College, said many students backed Dr Stevens.

He said: "I don't think many people appreciate that six or seven colleges are having trouble surviving."

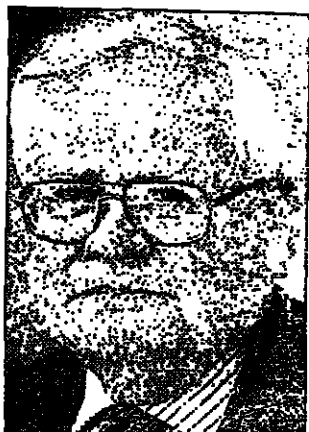
"Many people do think that Oxford is full of rich students but the vast majority have to very careful about their finances."

"If New Labour wants Oxford to be less elitist then it should not introduce tuition fees - that will be the greatest deterrent to poor students."

A degree of difference

Oxford:
 University population: 15,000
 Nightlife: pubs and a handful of clubs
 Clubs: Oxford rowing club
 Drinks: Chateau Margaux 1958
 Cost of accommodation: £48 per week
 Football clubs: Oxford United - Desmond Morris is a regular at the Manor Ground

Manchester:
 University population: 18,000
 Nightlife: trendy bars, gay village
 Clubs: Hacienda
 Drinks: Boddingtons
 Cost of accommodation: £37
 Football clubs: Manchester United and Manchester City. Fans include Gallagher brothers (City) and Posh Spice (United)



Robert Stevens, Master of Pembroke College

Rail operators given warning

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

OVERCROWDING on five commuter rail routes into London has been officially confirmed for the first time, and the operating companies have been warned they will be fined unless they provide more trains.

The warning came from the rail franchise director, John O'Brien, who in a nine-month period to the end of December, fined train companies £750,000 for running short trains during peak hours.

He said that five of the 10 train companies serving London are in excess of the 3 per cent limit on overcrowding at peak times. A lesser problem exists on Merseyside and in the Glasgow area, but no action needs to be taken.

The worst overcrowding is on Connex South Central (4.8 per cent), Thameslink (4.4 per cent), South West Trains (3.8 per cent), Great Eastern (3.3 per cent). A fifth company,

Connex South Eastern, is on the overcrowding threshold, while the other five operators serving London, although within limits, have seen a significant growth in passenger numbers over the past year.

The number of morning rush-hour passengers has grown by 10 per cent over the past year, while the evening rush hour numbers have risen by 7 per cent. "We have seen an almost unprecedented growth in train usage which reflects both increased employment in central London and effective marketing by some of the operators," said Mr O'Brien. The number of rush hour passengers has increased more quickly than Mr O'Brien anticipated, rising in 1997 to 786,737 from 774,460 in 1996.

Mr O'Brien said discussions were at an early stage to identify ways of creating more capacity. His powers are limited, but he can fine companies that run trains with four passenger carriages at peak times when they are supposed to operate eight.

Cost grounds EU lunar robot plan

Tim Radford
Science Editor

EUROPEAN space chiefs have quietly dropped the idea of putting a European robot on the Moon by 2001.

But scientists still hope to work with industry and students at the University of Surrey to put a small £10 million satellite in orbit over the Moon's poles next year.

After a meeting of delegates to the European Space Agency decided not to put the proposal before ministers this summer, Wubbo Ockels, Europe's first astronaut, said: "I am disappointed that the political world was not in the position to support such an interesting programme."

"There was no question - that this was a very attractive, appealing programme. The problem is just that they do not have money."

In fact, Dr Ockels - a Dutchman who went into

space with Nasa in 1985 - and his partners in the £150 million venture, were only looking for "seed money" from Europe. They proposed a small orbiter which would survey the Moon, and a heavier lander which would touch down at a point at the Moon's south pole called the Peak of Perpetual Light.

Most of the cost would be covered by commercial sponsorship, they argued.

Several of Europe's industrial space giants have been working on the designs for a lander for more than a year. Ironically, the EuroMoon 2000 proposal began as a millennium celebration and took on a new urgency when Nasa scientists announced the discovery of millions of tons of water at the Moon's poles - where the Europeans proposed to place a probe.

Dr Ockels said last night he hoped one part of the programme could be saved, and that a 100kg orbiter built by student engineers could be "piggy-backed" into space with a commercial satellite.

Miami
help
boy to

Big brains

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Port 9



Francisco Arroyo, seven, undergoes dolphin therapy with Federico Quiroz in Mexico City. Play in the pool is used as a reward

Miami dolphins help mute British boy to speak

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

An eight-year-old boy who has been mute from birth has said his first words after swimming with dolphins at a therapy centre in Miami, Florida.

Nikki Brice, from Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, has always had the physical ability to speak, but because of his hyperactivity and short attention span, possibly caused by oxygen deprivation at birth, he has never learned to use it.

Standard techniques used in Britain failed. In desperation, his mother took him to the Dolphin Human Therapy Center in Miami, where he received conventional speech-language therapy, but was rewarded by play in the pool with the dolphins. Within days, Nikki had spoken.

"It is a dream come true," said his mother, Tabitha Brice, who raised £10,500 for the treatment.

David Nathanson, who has been treating Nikki, said he had helped children with a range of disorders, from attention deficit problems to cerebral palsy.

"Underlying the difficulties, particularly with learning and motivation, is an inability to attend for a period of time," Dr Nathanson said.

Devising his therapy, he looked at "what grabs the kids", he said. Research and clinical experience told him it was music, warm water and friendly animals, so he set up shop with the eight dolphins in Miami's Seaquarium.

He motivates the children to concentrate and work on their problems with the promise of a swim.

"They have to do certain

things on the dock in order to get the reward of the dolphin," he said. "Take a child like Nikki who is quite hyperactive and has a short attention span. He didn't look at things for more than a minute. Now we have him right on points for a 40 minute session."

The boy's first word showed how much the dolphin sessions mattered to him. "We hadn't been there long," said his mother, "when Nikki was told to get out of the water at the end of a dolphin swimming session and he stood very quietly at the side of the tank."

"He must have thought that he wasn't going to be allowed to go swimming with the dolphins again because he suddenly pointed at the water and said: 'In'."

"We all just stood there in shock because it was so unexpected, but once we got over it we quickly told him that he could go in again and he soon cheered up."

He is now beginning to pick up other words, like "please". According to Dr Nathanson, the children gain in confidence and motivation when they succeed in breaking through the first barrier. When they go home after two or three weeks, they take a

video of them swimming with the dolphins, which is played as a reward and a reminder of what they have achieved.

Mrs Brice is overwhelmed by the progress Nikki has

made. She said: "There is something magical that happens between children and dolphins, something that I don't think we will ever fully understand."

Tilt faces calls to quit after citing asphyxia research

Anger at gaffe over black's jail death

Sarah Hall

THE director general of the prison service faced calls for his resignation last night after he claimed physiological differences meant black people were more likely to suffocate when restrained by warders than those who were white.

Richard Tilt's comments came after an inquest ruled that Alton Manning, 33 — the third black man to die in prison while under restraint between October and December, 1995 — was unlawfully killed at the privately-run Blackenhurst jail, near Redditch, Worcestershire, in December, 1995, after being put in a neck hold in contravention of prison service regulations.

Seven warders were suspended after the verdict, pending a decision by the Crown Prosecution Service whether or not to bring charges.

Following the verdict, at Kidderminster on Wednesday, Mr Tilt told BBC2's Newsnight programme that six of the seven people who had died in prisons while being restrained since 1992 were black, with the seventh being of mixed race.

That had prompted prison service research which had shown that "Afro-Caribbean people are more likely to suffer positional asphyxia than whites. That's the evidence that seems to be emerging, not just in this country but in other countries as well."

Yesterday, the prison ser-



'Afro-Caribbean people are more likely to suffer positional asphyxia than whites'

Richard Tilt, left

vice said that Mr Tilt was greatly concerned at any upset his comments may have inadvertently caused. The research, conducted by a Home Office director of health care into an unspecified number of deaths, was "based around the prevalence of the inherited sickle cell condition among Afro-Caribbean people. The condition can make people more susceptible to positional asphyxia as a consequence of physical restraint."

The explanation, which drew on the death of Dennis Stevens, a black prisoner whose sickle cell trait was found to have contributed to his dying after being restrained in Dartmoor prison in 1995, failed to assuage Labour's Tottenham MP, Bernie Grant, who called to see the evidence. Nor did it satisfy the chairman of the Birmingham racial monitoring unit Maxie Hayles.

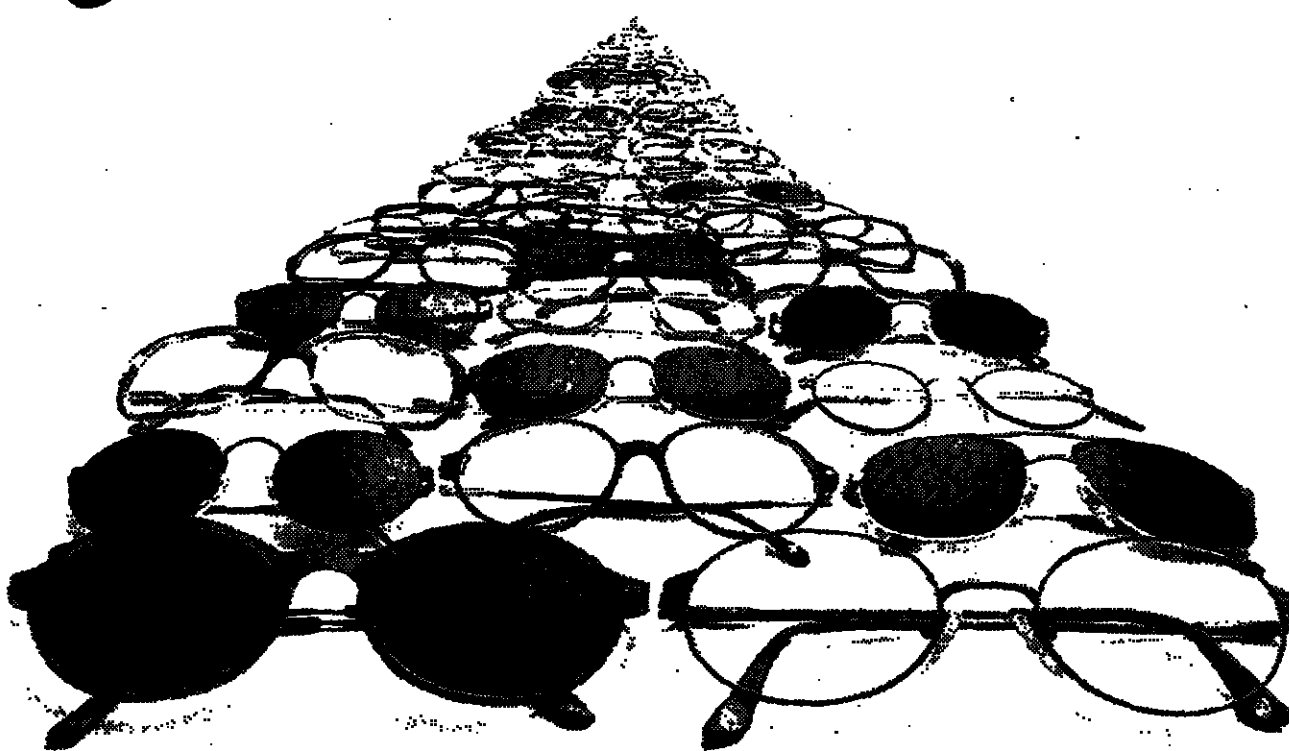
Mr Hayles, organiser of the Alton Manning Justice Campaign, said: "I would suggest this man resign."

"Comments like this merely perpetuate negative stereotypes about black people — and the worrying thing is he is in such a position of authority."

The pressure group Inquest accused Mr Tilt of being "racist and grossly offensive."

The inquest jury, which reached a unanimous verdict in 34 hours, heard that Manning, from Birmingham, died after six warders carried him horizontally for 40 yards, while a seventh held his neck in a vice-like grip between his forearms, until blood gushed from Mr Manning's mouth.

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OPTICIANS

Big brained mammals with history of service to man

A DOLPHIN brain weighs 5lb. A human brain weighs 3lb. People have speculated that dolphins might be profound as well as just deep.

Dolphins showed their worth to humans early on: they appear on coins in Corinth in 415 BC.

A dolphin, Pelorus Jack.

used to pilot ships through Marlborough Sound in New Zealand 90 years ago

Wild dolphins have spontaneously appeared as tourist attractions — from Dingle in Ireland to Opononi in New Zealand.

US military scientists tried to use dolphins with bay-

nets strapped to their noses as guards in Haiphong Harbour, Vietnam — to watch for enemy frogmen.

A US navy programme trained dolphins as watchdogs to protect Trident submarines.

Russians at Sevastopol used "dolphin therapy" to cure children of bedwetting.

Public schools warned after equal pay ruling

Annella Gentleman

GOVERNORS of public schools were warned yesterday to review salaries paid to female staff after a gym mistress at an independent girls' school won an equal pay claim. She had been paid less than a man who held the same job at an associated boys' school.

The ruling may affect many other female teachers at independent schools who could see their pay rise as a result of the decision.

Eileen Halloran, aged 50, former PE department head at the fee-charging City of London school for girls, should have been paid the same as the director of PE and sport at the City of London school for boys, an industrial tribunal ruled on Tuesday.

Miss Halloran is expecting compensation of tens of thousands of pounds from her em-

ployer, the City of London Corporation, which owns and manages both schools.

Peter Smith, general secretary of Miss Halloran's union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said there were "potentially hundreds" of women in similar positions. He said: "A significant number of the country's top public schools will need to look as a matter of urgency at what they are paying their teaching staff."

Mr Smith suggested the tribunal decision might also have repercussions in single-sex state schools. "In the teaching profession it is well known that women teachers tend to be paid less than men even though the salary scales are now common," he said.

As head of PE from 1973 to 1985, Miss Halloran's basic salary of £22,500 was more than £7,000 less than that of her opposite number. She was also paid less than two junior PE teachers at the boys' school.

Miss Halloran was one of about 70 teachers at the girls' school — most of them women — being paid on a lower scale. The tribunal rejected the corporation's argument that lower pay in the girls' school merely reflected lower fees — ruling that this was in itself discriminatory.

Ms Halloran, who retired for health reasons in 1995, said she and several colleagues had been demanding pay equality since the 1970s.

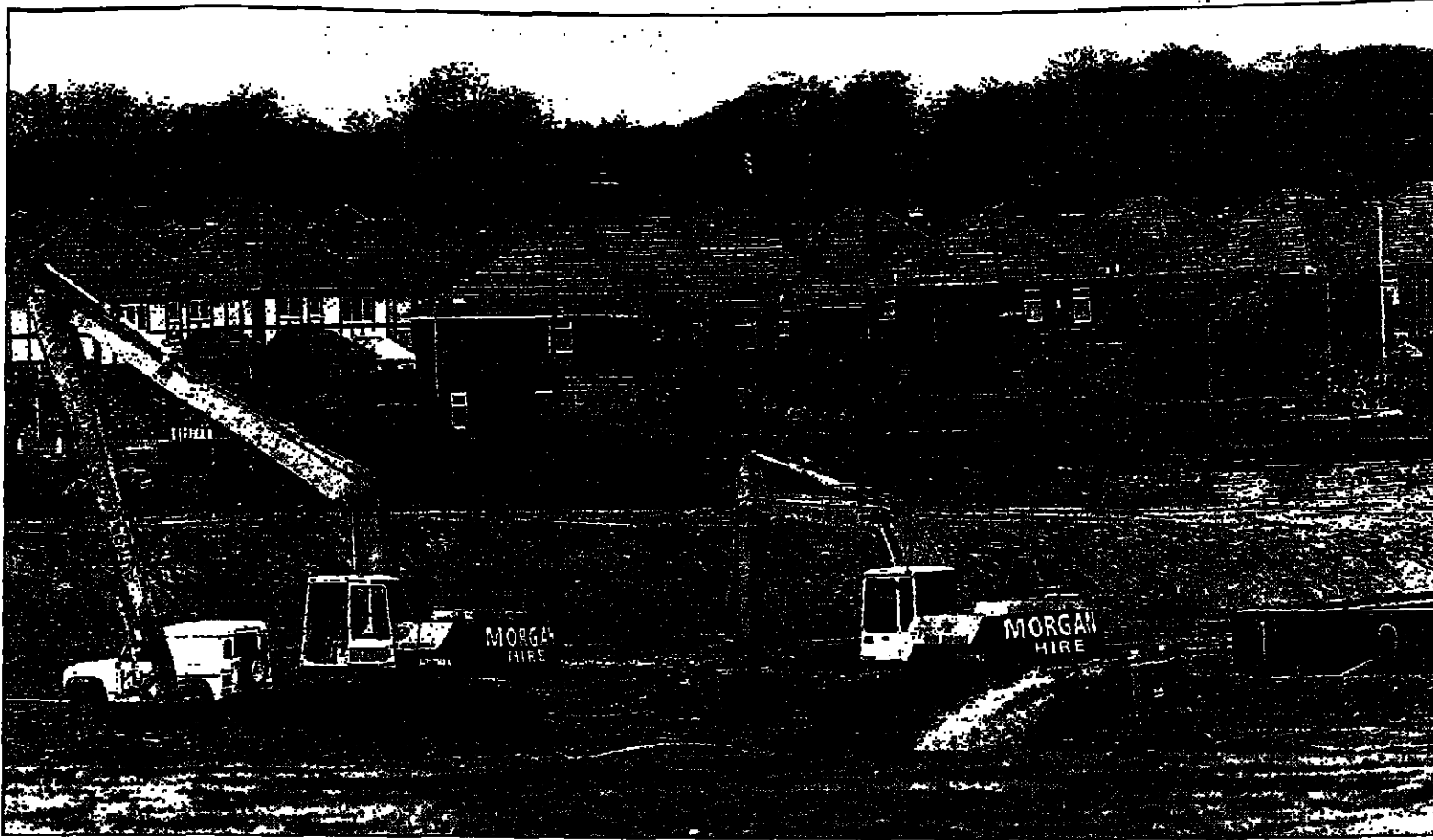
"No adequate reason for this disparity in pay was given, but it was common knowledge that the majority of staff at the girls' school were being underpaid in comparison with their male counterparts at the boys' school," she said.

A spokesman for the corporation said it was grappling with the implications of the ruling. "It could affect a number of people, and we may have to evaluate every contract."

Huddle deserves a little understanding as England stumble from the relief of having qualified to reservations about how well the team might do in the tournament proper. David Lacey on the pressure and resentment building up around the England coach

'I was effectively sniffing glue for 22 years. The fumes were so bad in some parts of the factory that we learned to recognise each other by our shoes, so little could be seen above waist height'

— James Fallon, retired fitter



Contractors at work on the site of the British Sidac factory in St Helens, clearing the remains of chemicals tanks

PHOTOGRAPH BY DON MCPHREE

Workers in 'glue sniffing' factory get £75,000

Award follows 20 years exposure to mix of hazardous chemicals

David Ward

TWO men who developed asthma, memory loss and mood swings after working for more than two decades with noxious chemicals at a plant making Cellophane were yesterday celebrating a £75,000 compensation victory.

"I was effectively sniffing glue for 22 years," said James

Fallon, aged 65. "In the early days the fumes were so bad in some parts of the factory that we learned to recognise each other by our shoes and lower bodies because so little could be seen above waist height."

Mr Fallon and Robert Burrows, aged 70, both worked as fitters at British Sidac at St Helens, Merseyside, which closed in 1982. They came into contact with carbon disulphide, toluene, formaldehyde

and phosgene. The company, now based in Wigan, Cumbria, denied liability but settled the claims before a court hearing due in Manchester next month.

"I suspect cases like these are only the tip of the iceberg," said Pauline Chandler of Manchester solicitors Thomsons, who handled the men's claim. "Industrial exposure to solvents has been going on for many years but there are still relatively few identified cases of injury. This is partly because many of the symptoms like mood swings, fatigue, memory im-

pairment and impotence are common in the population at large, and doctors may not recognise a link with work."

Mr Fallon, who claims he wore no masks or protective clothing during his employment from 1965 to 1980, was attracted by high pay levels and often worked seven days a week to boost his income. "The company told us nothing," he said. "They concentrated on the fire risks because the chemicals were so volatile. The smell was evil and there were times when I was high on a cocktail of different things."

"I suffered constant tiredness and would come home from work and flop — there was no way I could be woken up. It was like being dead."

He also began to develop asthma, but only realised the true threat to his health after seeing a health and safety poster in the 1980s. "This has taken a chunk out of our lives and I will be on medication for life. I'm very angry but I'm happy with the settlement. I had not intended to break the bank — I just wanted justice and a little recompense."

The British Sidac site was

bought by St Helens council, which began a clean-up four years ago. Contractors were brought in to deal with the remains of carbon disulphide and the job will continue for another three months before factory units can be built.

For the company, David Teasdale of solicitors James Chapman, said the two originally made "very substantial claims", including compensation for loss of earnings. "The insurers decided to offer a modest proportion of the potential claim to avoid an expensive trial. They still deny liability."

Greenham leukaemia 'a mystery'

David Fairhall

THE high incidence of childhood leukaemia around the former cruise missile base at Greenham Common, Berkshire, cannot have been caused by a nuclear bomber accident there in 1985, a fresh investigation ordered by the Department of Health has concluded.

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment — which was not told about the accident when it first looked into the Greenham leukaemia cluster some years ago — can find no evidence that a nuclear weapon was involved when a US air force B47 bomber caught fire. But its latest report criticises the Ministry of Defence for withholding vital information from its earlier investigation.

Radioactivity around the Berkshire base was predominantly due to natural sources, with a small contribution from atmospheric bomb tests, fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl power station accident, and releases from the nearby atomic weapons establishments at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Radiation levels at Greenham, both natural and man-made, were lower than in many other parts of the UK. However, the report confirms the earlier finding that there is a "small excess" in the incidence of leukaemia in children aged up to four in West Berkshire.

There was a similar excess in young people in just one of

Newbury's electoral wards. Since the leukaemia did not appear to be linked to radiation exposure, the explanation may have to await analysis of national data on the distribution of childhood cancer, as recommended by the 1989 report.

The committee was set up in 1985 to advise the government. In this week's report it castigates the ministry for not disclosing a secret 1981 study by two Aldermaston scientists which suggested that the pattern of radioactivity around Greenham could be traced back to the B47 accident.

Those releasing radioactivity into the environment had a responsibility to inform the committee, and the ministry was not exempt from that. The Aldermaston study only became public knowledge in 1996, when it was leaked by CND. It proved "vital to an understanding of the Greenham Common question", the committee says. Without it, the committee's earlier investigation had to rely on atmospheric discharge data that could only be estimated.

But, "fortunately", the fresh information did not change its overall conclusions.

CND yesterday attacked the secrecy of the Government about nuclear activities.

Dave Knight, CND chairman, said: "We know, for example, that there have been at least 20 incidents involving nuclear weapons since 1960, yet no details are available, on grounds of 'national security'."

Estate agents' dirty deeds

Sally Pook

JUST when you thought you knew how low estate agents were, a new survey confirms that their behaviour routinely extends far beyond your worst nightmares.

Forget the dissembling words and spivish deals, these charm merchants actually have sex in our homes, throw parties in our lounges, size up clients for some carnal entertainment (but only if they look like Elizabeth Hurley or Jennifer Aniston) — and given the opportunity — would consider sex as payment in kind for selling a property.

More bizarrely, one in 10 estate agents have made themselves "at home" in a property — which may include anything from eating a bag of crisps to having "sex on their own", according to the researchers.

A quarter admitted to having sex in the houses they were selling, 5 per cent have thrown a party in a property and 14 per cent

would accept sex with a prospective client, according to the survey. Less surprisingly, perhaps, two out of three said they would persuade their own grand-mother to sell her house against her will, while more than half believe that most of their profession lie to make a sale.

"It is quite a shocker. I was not expecting results like this — but then estate agents never cease to amaze me," said Andy Clerkin, editor of Stuff, a men's consumer magazine which commissioned the survey.

"What concerns me most is that these guys seem almost blasé about it, as if it is normal behaviour. We have not offered any advice to readers on how to spot an estate agent who is not going to throw a party in their beloved house, but evidently people need to be diligent about who they are leaving their keys with."

Nearly 1,000 estate agents across Britain took part in the survey, which was conducted by the market

research company NSM. They reveal themselves to be overwhelmingly Tory — 61 per cent vote Conservative — they are married but inclined to infidelity and nearly half earn more than £30,000 a year. The majority own a BMW but dream of driving a Ferrari and more than two thirds smoke and gamble.

The majority, 67 per cent, spend up to £350 on their pinstripe suits and their favourite bands are Simply Red and Oasis. Ten per cent admitted having made themselves "at home" in a property.

Ruth Dunsmore-Hardy, chief executive of the National Association of Estate Agents, gave a withering response. "We do not believe this survey is a true representation of professional estate agents in the UK."

"We have asked for evidence on how the survey was undertaken and have been given no answers. We therefore leave it to the public to draw their own conclusions."

Schoolgirl mothers

Teen mags 'fight pregnancies'



Tessa Jewell... 'a need to be less smirking about sex'

Sarah Bosley Health Correspondent

TEEN magazines, which came under heavy fire from MPs two years ago for carrying sexually explicit articles, are to be enlisted as a weapon in the fight to stem the rise in teenage pregnancies.

Yesterday the Health Minister, Tessa Jewell, revealed that she had held meetings with the heavily criticised editors of magazines like Sugar, Bliss and Just Seventeen. They "have an important role to play in communicating with young people in their formative years," she told the Family Planning Association national conference.

"I was touched by the letters they showed me from teenagers. Each one was a poignant and confused cry for help. It is absolutely clear that many girls become pregnant through sheer ignorance. We need to create a climate where young people understand the consequences of their actions and their relationships."

Peter Luff, Conservative MP for Mid Worcestershire, attacked the teen magazines in 1996, for their "squalid titillation, salaciousness and smut" after he found his 10-year-old daughter reading one. He introduced a bill in

the House of Commons to try to force them to carry age warnings on sexually explicit material. He won backing from the then Home Office minister, Tom Sackville, who told the Commons some magazines were using sex and exploiting the innocence of young people to make money.

The publishers and retailers of the magazines agreed to set up a working party to draw up a code of conduct.

Ms Jewell said some children did not feel able to talk to their parents, teachers or other authorities about sex. She wanted to reach children before they were sexually active. Teen magazines were one route, but she also in-

tended to work with Estelle Morris in the Department for Education and Employment to launch a national advisory group on personal, social and health education in schools.

"I think an important focus of that group will be to help pupils understand what it means to have children... so they do not have children while they themselves are children."

She wanted boys to be as aware of their responsibilities as girls, and for both to be able to talk to their parents about sex. "That means cultural change. It means a society where we are more open about sex, less smirking," she said.

Girls' poignant cries for help

Letters in teen magazines:

"I'm only 14 years old and I have this problem about sex. If you sleep with a guy and don't have sex, can you get pregnant? And when you kiss a guy, I mean not just a kiss, but kissing with a guy for quite a long time, can you get pregnant too? All my friends say if you have sex with a guy, you stand a chance of getting pregnant. Is this true?"

"ABOUT a month ago me and my boyfriend had sex and I'm only 15. Not long ago did I find out that I was pregnant. I haven't told anyone because I'm so scared. My boyfriend doesn't know either. Please help. I don't know what to do."



Some of the magazines being recruited by the Government to help stem the rise in teenage pregnancies

News in brief

Murder suspect freed by police

A MAN arrested in connection with the murder of schoolgirl Kate Bushell was released last night, a spokeswoman for Devon and Cornwall police said. He had been questioned at Exeter since Wednesday. The 14-year-old had her throat slashed while walking a neighbour's dog near her home on the outskirts of the city in November. Police ordered DNA tests on all men living in a half-mile radius of the scene.

PC faces sack over slap

A POLICEMAN faces the sack after slapping a school-

boy. PC Roger Hateley, aged 51, was convicted at Wolverhampton magistrates court yesterday of common assault after an incident at a school in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. He was fined £250 with £400 costs and ordered to pay the boy, who cannot be named, £30 compensation. Hateley had gone to the school to investigate a burglary, and claimed the slap had been an accident. He had wanted to grab the boy by the scruff of the neck.

Assembly gag lifted

AN UNPRECEDENTED attempt to gag elected representatives was abandoned by the Government yesterday, when it dropped its demand that members of the Welsh Assembly should be bound by the Official Secrets Act. Peter Hain, the Welsh minister, announced the climb-down during a Commons debate on the Government of Wales Bill. Originally, all 60 assembly

members would have faced prosecution for disclosing information about a range of issues, including European Union grants or Ministry of Defence activities in Wales. Only members of the proposed Welsh executive council will now be covered by the act. — Richard Norton-Taylor

Bogus don discharged

OXFORD magistrates gave a conditional discharge yesterday to a man who passed himself off as a doctor who has a first-class degree in computer science from another university, had an earlier hearing admitted obtaining property by deception and making a false instrument — an Oxford membership card he forged while employed in the admissions office, and with which he was able to obtain a room in Worcester College and use university computers.

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The RSPB is the charity which takes action for wild birds and the environment

155

Appeal for lessons in citizenship

Vivek Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

LESSONS on how to be a good citizen should form part of the national curriculum to combat "apathy, ignorance and cynicism" about public life, a report on democracy and citizenship in schools recommended yesterday.

The report also concedes, though, that safeguards have to be put in place to prevent the lessons from being used to indoctrinate pupils.

According to the interim report of the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and Teaching of Democracy in Schools, a whole generation of youngsters have become alienated and a "change in the political culture of this country is needed."

The working group which compiled the work was led by Bernard Crick of the University of London.

A full report is due to be published in July.

The report recommends teaching children social and moral behaviour and how to become more involved in their communities. It identifies three key strands to effective citizenship: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.

Welcoming the report, David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, said: "The key strands are essential to responsible adult life in a modern democracy. Professor Crick's recommendations would, of course, leave the detail of citizenship education to individual schools."

The Government has always made clear that any recommendations will respect the existing place of RE (religious education) in the curriculum and in no way supersede or replace it.

The report claims that nearly one in three of those

Main points

- Children should be taught about socially and morally responsible behaviour.
- They need to learn about becoming helpfully involved in the life of the community, and encouraged to do voluntary work.
- There needs to be more instruction on how to make oneself effective in public life, including knowledge about conflict resolution.
- Citizenship education should take up no more than five per cent of lesson time but should be included in existing subjects.

aged 18-24 had no plans to vote in last year's general election. It points to greater interest among young voters in single issue pressure groups, particularly green ones.

The report is unlikely to appease education officials who are concerned that citizenship lessons could be manipulated by a future administration to indoctrinate children.

Last week, Patrick Tobin, chairman of the Headmasters' Conference of Independent Schools said that the danger would be all the greater if citizenship education were to become a substitute for Christianity in schools.

The report recommends the formation of a working group to examine the details of citizenship lessons. It also states that given the sensitivity over the issue, further guidance on areas surrounding citizenship will be given in the publication of the final report.

A separate group, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is also due to give its views on the teaching of citizenship and democracy later this year.



A pair of nautilus at Weymouth sea life centre. Some 600 million years ago they were found off Dorset, but are now found only in the warm waters of the Pacific

PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAUMER

Stepfather insists he did not kill 9-year-old Zoe

Geoffrey Gibbs

ARMED driver Miles Evans took to the witness box at Bristol crown court yesterday to deny involvement in the murder of his nine-year-old stepdaughter, Zoe, whose body was found on a Wiltshire hillside six weeks after she went missing from their home in Warrminster.

Zoe Evans was suffocated when the small crop top she

had been wearing was stuffed in her mouth. She had also inhaled blood after her nose was broken by a severe blow.

Her naked body was buried head first in a badger's sett on Battlesbury Hill less than a mile from her home.

Asked by defence counsel Alan Jenkins QC whether he had killed Zoe or had had any part in taking her to Battlesbury Hill, Evans replied: "No I didn't."

He said he had not interfered with Zoe sexually nor

had he been about to on the night she disappeared.

The Crown alleges that Evans, a 24-year-old Royal Logistics Corps driver who has served in Northern Ireland and Bosnia, murdered Zoe after taking her at night from the family's home on January 11 last year.

The prosecution has told the jury that he dropped two "crucial" pieces of evidence on his way to Battlesbury Hill — a blue No Fear T-shirt found in a copse 100 yards

from the house, and a pair of Zoe's knickers. Both were stained with the dead girl's blood.

Cross-examined by Nigel Pascoe QC, prosecuting, Evans said he was not suggesting his wife, Paula, had killed Zoe.

He said that with her 10th birthday approaching, Zoe had everything to look forward to and that there was no reason why she should want to run away from home. He said she did not like the dark

and would have been terrified when taken from the house on the night she died.

Mr Pascoe suggested to Evans that during a taped police interview after his arrest — played in court yesterday — he "very nearly admitted" striking Zoe. "Are we dealing here with something that went dreadfully wrong that night?" he asked.

Evans said: "I don't know what happened that night. I didn't do anything to Zoe."

Mr Pascoe said that the T-shirt could only have left the house if Zoe or someone in the house was wearing it or carrying it.

"Whoever left with the shirt must have left with Zoe and against her will. This parent must have made quite sure that little Zoe didn't call out and must have had a hand over her mouth."

He said that if a random perverser had killed the child, he would have felt no need to bury her.

The trial continues.

Solicitors face more complaints

Claire Dyer
Legal Correspondent

COMPLAINTS against solicitors have rocketed, forcing the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors, the profession's regulatory body, to draft an extra staff.

Complaints are up 30 per cent on the same period last year, and are now running at about 35,000 a year against a profession of only around 75,000. The 300-strong OSS is about to advertise for 30 temporary caseworkers and 10 administrative staff to help clear a backlog built up since last August.

The OSS was launched 18

months ago by the Law Society to replace the discredited Solicitors Complaints Bureau and restore public confidence in the system for regulating solicitors. Its launch followed warnings by the then legal services ombudsman, Michael Barnes, that the profession had only one more chance to get its house in order.

It set up new systems to improve efficiency and targets for speedier responses to phone calls and letters. But it has been forced to acknowledge in letters to complainants that it is failing to meet targets for clearing up the backlog.

Arnold Rosen, a solicitor practising in London's West

End, said that the office was wasting time and effort on trivial complaints. The OSS took on a complaint against him by a justice clerk — senior legal adviser to magistrates — after a policeman overheard him call a woman clerk a "silly cow" in a private conversation with a client at a magistrates court.

Mr Rosen argues that the office should have rejected the complaint since the conversation was private, the woman was out of earshot, and the magistrates were not in court. But not only did the OSS investigate the complaint, it entered into negotiations over his offer to send the woman clerk a bunch of flowers.

"To my astonishment, the OSS engaged in a counter-offer," he writes in today's New Law Journal. "Having had conversations with the clerk to the justices, they informed me that if I were to send the flowers first, the clerk might withdraw the complaint."

"Alas, my lifetime habits as a litigation lawyer die hard. I feared that if my bouquet were not sufficiently large or fragrant, proceedings might continue. In short, I wanted the complaint withdrawn as a pre-condition to the flowers delivery. After all, who was to say that the lady would accept daffodils when she might have been anticipating red roses?"

Martin Mears, a former Law Society president and a critic of the OSS, said: "They have been sending out standard form letters saying it will be 12 weeks before a case-worker will even look at your complaint."

"One of the reasons they cannot deal with the workload is they are dealing with idiosyncrasies of this kind."

The OSS said the letters referred to the backlog of cases before a new streamlined system was set up in January. "Most complaints received since January are being actioned within a couple of weeks." The extra staff would be allocated to cases dating back before the introduction of the new system.

Peer seeks to lift bar on Catholics

Michael White
Political Editor

AFRESH attempt to enable Catholics and other non-Anglicans to become prime minister, lord chancellor or even monarch will be launched in the Lords today — by a Presbyterian peer from Northern Ireland.

Lord Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party in the province, will ask peers to clarify the law regarding the lord chancellorship, held by Lord Irvine, a member of the establishment Church of Scotland, and theoretically not open to members of the Jewish and other faiths.

Lord Alderdice will also introduce a separate bill to eliminate residual prejudice against non-Anglicans becoming prime minister. It lingers because 19th century legislation makes it an offence for anyone not a member of the established Church of England to give the Crown advice on ecclesiastical appointments — which prime ministers routinely do when Anglican bishops become vacant.

Lord Alderdice stressed last night that he embarked on his three-part plan well before it emerged that Tony Blair, whose wife and children are Catholics, has been worshipping alone at Westminster Cathedral. Aides emphatically deny that he intends to convert.

In his drive to extirpate the remains of bias against Catholicism, Lord Alderdice also wants to repeal the section of the 1702 Act of Settlement which bans Catholics from the throne and from royal marriages.

He planned to raise this, the third of his initiatives, today. But it was withdrawn after the peer, who sits in the Lords with the Liberal Democrats, was advised that too few potentially hostile lords would be absent on a Friday. He intends to return to the issue.

Lord Irvine has made clear his opposition to the Alderdice bill concerning his office, which has reached the committee stage. He calls it "well-intentioned, but unnecessary" and claims that it could detract from the lord chancellor's powers.

As things stand, Catholics can be lord chancellor. Margaret Thatcher had the ban repealed in the 1980s in order to make Lord Rawlinson lord chancellor — although she then changed her mind about the appointment. The law had already been changed in the 1870s to allow Jews to hold the post — as Sir Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, did in the 1920s — but that law was repealed accidentally in the 1960s.

Sell-off fears blamed for spate of post staff strikes

Seamus Milne
Labour Editor

POSTAL workers' leaders yesterday blamed a spate of strikes in four English cities on uncertainty within the Post Office created by the threat of privatisation.

Thousands of postal workers staged unofficial walkouts in Liverpool and London yesterday, while official strikes were held in Oxford last night and Birmingham earlier this week.

In Liverpool, post boxes were sealed as unofficial action spread in protest at plans to transfer work out of the city, while several London sorting offices were struckbound after staff walked out of the Willesden depot in support of a worker suspended for insubordination. A dispute about overtime pay flared at the north London Mount Pleasant sorting office.

The Birmingham dispute is over staffing; the Oxford strike in protest against a canteen closure.

Derek Hodgson, joint general secretary of the Communication Workers' Union, said the poor industrial relations in the Post Office were a "mirror of the uncertainty that surrounds the entire business, including the latest media reports that Government could still be considering some form of privatisation."



Powerhouse UK, displaying works by 50 top British designers, receives its finishing touches. The exhibition is being held in a 25ft high inflatable structure on Horse Guards Parade and will be opened next Friday by Tony Blair to coincide with a Europe-Asia business conference

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Women bishops divide Anglican event

Madeline Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

THE Lambeth Conference gathering of the Anglican bishops in Canterbury this summer is likely to be dogged by controversy over the presence of 11 women bishops.

Two bishops announced they will boycott the event and another 50 stipulated conditions for attendance.

There will be no group photograph of the episcopacy — normally a ritual of Lambeth Conferences, which are held every decade — and there will be no "great robed gatherings", Lambeth Palace

has assured bishops who object to ordination of women.

The opening procession into Canterbury Cathedral will be low key, says David Long, the conference manager, according to today's Church Times. He added that the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, was anxious to be "open and hospitable" to all bishops, whatever their views.

Leading the protest which threatens to wreck the chances of the Anglican Communion presenting a united front are two British bishops, the Rt Rev Noel Jones, Bishop of Sodor and Man and the Rt Rev Eric Kemp, Bishop of Chichester. Bishop Jones

has said he will attend no service, Bible study or working group in which a woman bishop is taking part.

Joining the protest are the bishops of Singapore, Zulu, Tanganyika, Victoria, Port Worth, Kilimanjaro, Balarat, the Windward Islands and Papua New Guinea. Initially, some of those were not going to attend the three-week conference being held at the University of Kent in July and August. Two Anglo-Catholic traditionalist separatist bishops in Madagascar, Rt Rev Keith Benzel of Antiranana and Rt Rev Donald Smith of Toamasina, are boycotting the event entirely.

This controversy follows moves on the homosexuality issue by both advocates and opponents in the Anglican Communion, in an attempt to put the question of homosexual rights on the Lambeth Conference agenda.

There are 11 women bishops in the Anglican Communion — two from Canada, one from New Zealand and the rest from the United States — all consecrated since the last conference in 1988.

"It would be an absolute tragedy for the Anglican Communion if bishops stayed away because an Anglican province had decided it was right before God to consecrate women bishops. These decisions are not taken lightly,

but with an enormous amount of prayer," said Elaine Storkey, director of the Institute of Contemporary Christianity, and a conference speaker.

Bishop Jones — as president of the International Bishops' Conference on Faith and Order, which has led the international protest against women bishops — is effectively setting up a conference inside a conference, with the option of separate services, "if need be", by renting alternative premises. A nearby parish church is to be made available to bishops wanting to celebrate their Eucharist away from the conference and any women bishops.

'Cuckoo' fostering peril

Sarah Beechey
Health Correspondent

FOSTER children can sometimes act as cuckoos in the family nest, doing their best trying to push out natural siblings and demanding the parents' attention for themselves, the annual conference of the British Psychological Society in Brighton heard yesterday.

Hostility between natural children and foster children in a family is one of the reasons why placements break down, said Deborah Browne, of the Department of Applied Psychology, University of Cork, who interviewed foster parents and social workers involved in 127 placements. Placing foster children where the natural siblings are older leads to greater success, she believes.

When siblings are in conflict, those related by birth show some competition towards each other. That is not the case when they have different parents, Ms Browne said. The natural children can resent the newcomer, who is demanding and obtaining more attention from the foster parents because of his or her history and behaviour.

"These children can probably be justifiably expected to feel frustrated and angry at the attention a non-related child is getting from their parents."

"This 'cuckoo' effect seems to be most destructive when children are fostered in families with younger children or children within three years of the age of the foster child."

Once foster parents realised what was going on, their unhappiness led to the end of the placement. "It would appear foster parents are not willing to sustain a placement if they feel their own children are being threatened in any way."

Hodde deserves a little understanding as England stumble from the relief of having qualified to reservations about how well the team might do in the tournament proper.
David Lacey on the pressure and resentment building up around the England coach

Sport98 page 6

Playground shootings



Her first instinct was to protect her pupils and it cost Shannon Wright (left) her life. Drummond Ayres reports from Jonesboro

'She always looked out for us'

SHANNON WRIGHT was calling her class to order after the dinner break at Westside school when the fire alarm sounded. Thinking it just another drill, she calmly ushered her pupils into the playground.

Then the shooting started. Children were being cut down by a fusillade of bullets fired by two schoolmates hidden in nearby woods.

Ms Wright acted instinctively. Spotting one of the boys taking aim at 12-year-old Emma Pittman, the teacher jumped into the line of fire, suffering fatal wounds to the

chest and abdomen. Emma was saved.

"I think Ms Wright saw that bullet coming," said Emma later. "She grabbed me by the shoulders and pushed me out of the way. I feel so sorry for her."

Amber Vanover, a classmate, said: "This guy was fixing to shoot her and Ms Wright moved in front of her. She got shot. She died. I loved her."

Ms Wright died in hospital on Tuesday night. There has not been much from which to take hope in Jonesboro this week, but



Dennis and Pat Golden leave the county sheriff's department flanked by police. Their son Andrew, aged 11, is accused with his cousin of multiple murder. PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE WINTROATH

many residents, including Lula Jones, the manager of the school canteen, found solace in Ms Wright's bravery. "She would do that, without a doubt," Ms Jones said of her friend, who was 32.

Ms Wright leaves behind a 2-year-old son, Zane, and a husband, Mitchell.

Diane Hattenhauer, a former pupil, remembered Ms Wright as "always kind and

caring". But most of all, she remembered her as a teacher "who always looked out for us".

Emma's mother, Susan, suggested the city should give Ms Wright an award for heroism. "She didn't think of herself. She thought of the children."

According to Mr Wright, his wife had dreamt of being a teacher at Westside since

childhood, when her idea of playing with her little brother was to write out a lesson plan and give him homework.

She had taught both of the boys arrested and charged after the shooting. But, said her husband, she never criticised either, nor any other pupils, even the most troublesome.

"She never came home and talked bad about any of her

kids. She just always enjoyed working with kids and helping kids."

Last week the couple took Zane to Disney World in Florida. Before heading home, Ms Wright took time to send postcards to some of her students.

When asked what he thought should happen to the boys — aged 11 and 13 — if they are found guilty of multiple murder, Mr Wright

replied: "Well, they are children. But it was pretty much premeditated. So I think they should spend the rest of their lives in prison. But we all know that's just not going to happen."

Under Arkansas law, the boys, if tried as juveniles, could be free on their 18th birthdays. — *New York Times*.

● A 4-year-old boy with a fascination for firearms has

been caught for a second time with a loaded gun at a nursery in Cleveland, Ohio. A staff member found the 9mm handgun in a coat pocket. The boy told the police that he took the gun from a shop owned by his guardian's brother.

"He is a bright, attentive, well-cared-for child, but he is absolutely fascinated with guns," said the nursery administrator Catherine Perry.

Banned miners promise to be as good as gold

Prospectors are asking Brazil for a second chance. Alex Bellos in Boa Vista reports

FERNANDO Aleluia used to be a rich man. At the height of the northern Brazilian gold rush 10 years ago he owned three houses and a farm with 5,000 chickens.

Now the 56-year-old prospector has only one house left and was forced to sell his last bit of gold, a 60g medal worth \$55, last week.

"Life was great here," he said as he took off his necklace and handed it to the gold dealer. "But then they banned gold-mining. Now we are all poor. The only prospecting we do now is at the rubbish dump, looking for food."

Mr Aleluia was one of about 40,000 fortune-seekers who came to Roraima, Brazil's northernmost state, in the early Eighties, making the capital, Boa Vista, the country's fastest growing town. Its tiny airport was reportedly the busiest in the world, as light aircraft flew to and from the gold-rich rainforest.

But the *garimpeiros* — wildcat miners — blasted the riverbeds and polluted the rivers with mercury, which they used to separate the gold, causing serious environmental damage. The Yanomami Indians, who have lived on the land for 2,000 years, were nearly

destroyed, their population plummeting from 20,000 in 1970 to about 9,000.

After intense international pressure, the Brazilian government banned mining in the Yanomami reservation, a territory the size of Portugal, in 1991. Most of the *garimpeiros* returned to a life of extreme poverty in Boa Vista.

Only a few traders in Rua de Ouro (Gold Street), who once dealt with several

"Someone is killed every day because someone else is going hungry — all they can do is mine"

pounds of the precious metal every week, remain. Many now act as pawnbrokers to *garimpeiros* selling their last possessions.

Edson Bittencourt, sitting in his empty shop, said he has not had a customer for weeks. "It is never going to get better," he said, adding that lawlessness was overtaking the town.

"Every day someone is killed because someone else is going hungry. Most of the

population here are *garimpeiros*. They don't have a profession or any education. All they can do is mine."

Another shopkeeper, Adalberto Oliveira, bemoaned the government's attitude towards the miners. "*Garimpeiros* are friends of the Indians. We used to give them food and medicine. We didn't give them malaria. It's from there not here. They always died from it but nobody knew."

Most of the *garimpeiros* still entering the reservation, are cleared out in regular government purges. In January 500 miners were arrested, many of them sick or starving, and another 250 gave themselves up, glad to be shipped out of the jungle. Three planes were seized last week.

Several thousand miners have crossed the border into Venezuela, Guyana and Surinam, where mining is still legal. In Santa Elena, 125 miles away on the Venezuelan border, there are about 20 gold and diamond shops.

Back in Boa Vista, the head of the *garimpeiro*'s union, Crisnel Ramalho, believes the solution is to allow controlled mining, and is supporting a bill drafted by a local congressman to allow mining companies access to reservations currently off limits.

"We want to practise our profession with dignity and above board," he said.



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Joanna Coles in New York

AN ELDERLY woman who died in Oregon on Tuesday after taking a cocktail of lethal drugs became the first person in the United States to commit assisted suicide legally.

Her death was the first since Oregon ratified a law last autumn that allows the terminally ill to kill themselves with doctors' help, provided they are of sound mind and are expected to die within six months.

Though the woman's family did not release her name, they said she had advanced breast cancer and two doctors had told her she had fewer than two months to live.

The advocacy group Oregon Compassion in Dying said a

doctor had prescribed drugs which the woman swallowed with a glass of brandy. She died half an hour later with her family by her side.

The family played reporters a tape, made two days before the death, in which the woman said she wanted to end her acute pain. She could not walk and found it difficult to breathe.

"I can't see myself living a few more months like this," she said. "I'm looking forward to it. I will be relieved of all the stress I have."

Opponents of the law, including many Catholics, claimed that Oregon would become a deathly destination for people unable to persuade doctors to help them die elsewhere. But so far there has been no influx of patients.

Oregon's experience is

being watched by other states as America's population grows older and more people demand help to die on their own terms.

The Michigan euthanasia advocate Dr Jack Kevorkian, who claims to have helped about 100 people commit suicide, is thought to have been present at two deaths in the past month.

Oregon has published a 91-page book laying out strict guidelines for the medical profession: doctors may only prescribe the fatal dose, they are not allowed to administer it or even hand it to the patient. Patients must have written diagnoses from at least two doctors.

The law was passed in 1994 but challenges held it up for three years. It was ratified last year with strong support.

British attention focused on Tony Blair's conversation with the Italian prime minister. But in Europe the question is whether Rupert Murdoch is going through a euro conversion.

Martin Walker warns Europe to watch out

This section page 12

1550 1/10/1998

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The Swiss are indignant as the US opens old wounds, reports David Hearst in Bern

Bluster of broken myth

THE deadline is approaching and the conservative Swiss are recoiling in horror: to be charged with concealing the war record of your fathers is bad enough, but to be hit with a threat by individual American states to boycott Swiss banks hurts.

"Who are the Americans to be judging us? Whose wealth was founded on slavery? In the war they only gave up their neutrality when they were attacked," said Thomas Borer, the career diplomat appointed to head off international pressure. His indignation is partly rhetorical — his wife is American.

Beneath the bluster of a small country which thought it occupied the moral high ground of Europe lies a serious loss of self-image. The truth which has emerged from dormant accounts, the gold trade with the Nazis, and unannounced insurance policies has knocked the stuffing out of the Swiss.

The myth of *Sonderfall Schweiz* (Switzerland as a special case) — that feisty

Efforts to defuse transatlantic row

THE United States and Switzerland sought yesterday to head off potential boycotts of Swiss banks over Holocaust-era claims, saying sanctions would be counter-productive.

As US local government officials met in New York to consider the boycott call, the two governments issued a joint statement seeking to defuse the emotional transatlantic row.

The deadline for banks to settle claims is March 31, but Senator Alfonse D'Amato proposed putting off any decision on boycotts until April 23. — Reuters.

stapo hit them and shouted at them. I was so glad that it was noon, and most people were at home having lunch. There was nobody around to tell me that I should not be doing what in fact I was doing."

Vreni Clement, the historian who discovered the officer's report, says the people living in Thurgau could not plead ignorance: everyone knew what was happening.

Ms Clement says the testimony of the police officer made clear that not all in the canton were friendly with the Nazis. "There were many in Thurgau, a high proportion of women, who hid refugees and passed them on inland," she

Communities, said: "When you confront elderly people about the war, they either say, 'We knew nothing' or 'It's all true, but we are not the only culprits'."

"I see that as an important development. If the Swiss say that they were no worse than others, they imply that they were no better than others, and the whole picture of *Sonderfall Schweiz* changes."

Swiss banks and the national government are waking up to their responsibilities. A detailed report about the country's role as the Nazis' bankers will be published next month by an international commission of historians.

Another commission will establish how many unclaimed bank accounts date back to the Nazi era. A fund of 273 million Swiss franc has been set up by banks and business for Holocaust.

Still the Swiss in Bern and Zurich ask: "Why us? All Swiss banks and all Swiss of all generations are being tarred with the same brush."

Mr Bloch smiles: "Now you know, I tell them, what it feels like to be Jewish."



Boris Yeltsin gestures to reporters yesterday. He appeared animated but occasionally confused during the press conference. PHOTOGRAPH: MIKHAIL METZEL

Past and present puzzle Yeltsin

James Meek in Bor

THE idea was enlightened. After European union and a European single currency — a European single history. Why shouldn't tens of millions of French, German and Russian schoolchildren swap their narrow national textbooks for an agreed version of European history?

It wasn't the size of the class that raised doubts but the number of teachers — three of them: Helmut Kohl, Boris Yeltsin and Jacques Chirac, none of them sure whether they were teaching history or making it.

And none of them able to agree what had happened in the previous two hours of their troika summit yesterday, let alone the previous millennium.

They did agree, however, that the three countries' historians should sit down and calmly settle a single

Strike threat as 200,000 face Russian dole queue

THE head of Russia's main trade union movement threatened strike action yesterday and condemned an IMF-sponsored government plan to lay off 200,000 state workers, writes Tom Whitehouse in Moscow.

"It is necessary to create new jobs rather than cut them down by hundreds of thousands," said Mikhail Shumakov of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions.

As a condition of a \$6.25 billion IMF loan programme, the government has agreed to budget cuts of \$4 billion,

but details of their implementation did not emerge until yesterday.

The deputy finance minister, Alexei Kudrin, has reportedly said that 200,000 employees, including 68,000 teachers and 22,000 health workers, will lose their jobs.

possibilities before the European Union.

The history book aside, they were able to agree yesterday on a multinational force to fight ecological disasters, and a Franco-Russian-German university (Mr Yeltsin said this would be an actual building, his partners saw it as more of a concept).

Mr Yeltsin looked pale and spoke slowly, with some effort of articulation. It was the first time he had met the foreign media en masse since his recovery from an infection.

At one point he appeared to mistake a photo opportunity for the beginning of the press conference and later had difficulty unscrambling his gift to the French and German leaders.

Each was presented with one of three gold and silver cream jugs, fixed together with a key, which Mr Yeltsin said would be brought together every time they met. The sole key will remain in Moscow.

Suspect serial killer held

Jon Hanley in Paris

FRENCH police yesterday arrested a man they believe is the serial killer and rapist of up to seven young Parisian women in the past seven years.

A police spokesman said Guy Georges, aged 37, a vagrant of Afro-Caribbean origin, was detained shortly after midnight near the bars and strip clubs of Pigalle in eastern Paris. His arrest came within hours of police releasing his photograph.

The suspect, who has served prison sentences for sex crimes committed in 1982 and 1983, was also held briefly in 1994 in connection with a murder case but was released when his DNA sample failed to match any on the victim.

Since then, police believe,

he may have raped and killed three times — prompting particular concern in the student district of Paris's 10th and 11th arrondissements.

The arrest is bound to raise questions about the efficiency of the French police, already under fire in Britain for the length of the investigation into the car crash that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, and the basic errors made during the inquiry into the unsolved murder of the Cornish teenager Caroline Dickinson.

But investigators were confident yesterday that they would get a conviction. They said DNA evidence from the bodies of three women, all assaulted in the same area of eastern Paris between December 1994 and November 1997, tied their deaths to one man.

They also believe there is a "strong probability" that the

man — dubbed the Butcher of the Bastille by the French press — may be responsible for the murder of a fourth woman, and a "reasonable chance" that he killed up to three others in crimes dating back to 1991.

A woman identified only as Elisabeth O managed to escape her attacker in June 1995. She helped police assemble a photo-fit portrait, but described the suspect as being North African in appearance.

More than 60 men were questioned — including one in London — but released for lack of a DNA match.

It was only last week that Parisian detectives expanded their trawl of DNA archives beyond men of North African origin. The genetic profile of the suspect allegedly matches traces of saliva found on a cigarette in the flat of one victim.

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10 WORLD NEWS

Team enters first Iraqi palace

Julian Borger
Middle East Correspondent

A GROUP of weapons experts and diplomats yesterday entered one of the presidential palaces that Saddam Hussein had vowed never to open to international scrutiny, marking the first substantial achievement of last month's agreement with the United Nations on weapons inspections.

The eight-hour visit to the Radwaniyah Palace in Baghdad was the first by inspectors from the UN Special Commission (Unsc) to any of the tightly guarded palaces in the seven years of their mission in Iraq — a breakthrough for the principle of unfettered access for which the United States and Britain went to the brink of war.



An Iraqi soldier watches weapons inspectors leave the UN headquarters in Baghdad on their way to the Radwaniyah Palace. PHOTOGRAPH: PAMEL KOPCZYNSKI

The first of a round of "baseline" visits, intended to survey the presidential compounds, and establish the principle of free access to any site where Unsc believes biological or chemical weapons may be concealed.

Horst Hothoff, a German diplomat, said the inspection party broke into several teams once inside the compound. Asked if the Iraqi es-

corts had been co-operative, Mr Hothoff said: "Fantastic, absolutely positive... I am personally really impressed by the spirit of the co-operation."

An Unsc official said the Iraqi government had been told on Wednesday evening that a palace visit would take place, but were not told which palace.

Before last month's accord Baghdad drew a "red line" around the presidential sites, refusing Unsc entry. In response, the US and Britain assembled an armada in the Gulf and threatened air strikes.

Blair shows support for Palestine

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

TONY Blair is to make an unprecedented gesture of British support for an independent Palestinian state by staying overnight in Gaza next month to match an overnight stay in Israel.

After Robin Cook's controversial visit to Jerusalem last week, the prime minister's stay at an official guesthouse after dinner with Yasser Arafat will be seen as symbolic.

Mr Blair will be the first national leader to spend the night on the territory of the Palestinian National Authority and thus send a strong signal about its future status, despite the impasse in peace negotiations with Israel.

"For us this will be a double visit that underlines the fact that the former British mandated territory of Palestine now has two political entities," Arafat said, the Palestinian ambassador to Britain, told the Guardian yesterday. "One is not yet a state but it is a state in the making. We highly appreciate the symbolic and political significance of this visit."

Britain ruled Palestine from 1917 to 1948, when it was handed over to the United Nations as Arab-Jewish fighting began. Palestinians have long blamed it for supporting Zionism by promising a national home for the Jews.

include Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, a huge market for British defence exports.

With Britain anxious not to offend Israel after the continuing ructions over the Foreign Secretary's trip, every detail of the Israeli Palestinian leg is being meticulously planned. "Obviously we are very aware we have to do the right thing in both quarters," a Whitehall official said.

Mr Blair, representing the European Union as well as Britain, is due to arrive in Israel on April 19, just over a week before it begins its 50th anniversary celebrations. He is expected to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, a stop for all visiting foreign leaders.

Mr Cook was criticised for failing to do this but laying a wreath on a memorial to Palestinians killed in the 1948 war. The Foreign Office insisted this was not pre-planned but he could not refuse.

Mr Blair could also face controversy over his wish to visit holy places in East Jerusalem if, as expected, Israel insists on providing security.

Because Britain does not recognise its sovereignty over the unilaterally united city, Jacques Chirac, the French president, had a spat with an Israeli policeman when he visited East Jerusalem two years ago.

Delicate preparatory work will also be required if Mr Blair is to meet Faisal Husseini, the Palestinian minister for East Jerusalem affairs. Jerusalem and settlements are two of the highly sensitive "final status" issues left until the end of the Oslo process.

News in brief

24 girls killed as blaze razes boarding school dormitory outside Mombasa

TWENTY-FOUR girls died in a fire that roared through a boarding school dormitory near Kenya's main coastal city, Mombasa, police said yesterday.

The girls who perished in the flames were burned beyond recognition. Supt Kimanathi said an electrical fault had ignited the fire at about 11.30pm on Wednesday.

Investigations were looking into unconfirmed reports that the dormitory's doors were locked from the outside.

One hundred and forty-four girls board at Bombolulu Girls Secondary School, which is 12 miles north-west of Mombasa and close to the highway that leads to the capital, Nairobi.

It was not immediately known how many girls were in the dormitory, which was razed by the flames. — Reuters, Nairobi

US to help African renaissance

David Broderford
In Cape Town

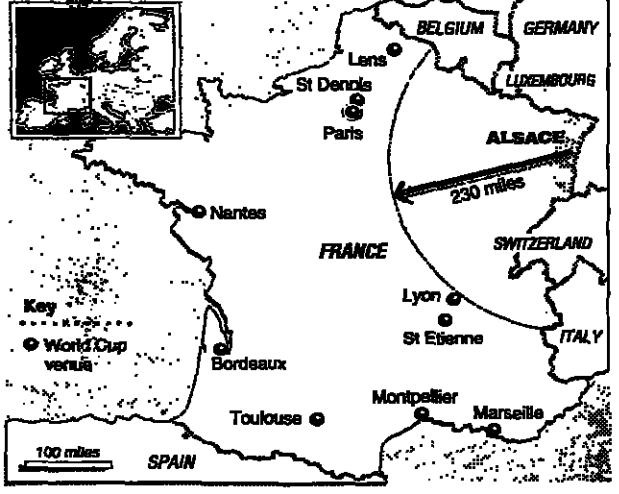
PRESIDENT Bill Clinton committed the United States yesterday to a partnership with South Africa in pursuit of the dream of an African renaissance.

He told a joint sitting of parliament in Cape Town that the US needed, and was determined to build, a strong South Africa.

The first US head of state to visit Africa, Mr Clinton was given an ecstatic reception by parliamentarians as he entered what he described as "this hall of freedom" hand-

in-hand with Nelson Mandela. Hillary Clinton, sitting in the public gallery with President Mandela's unofficial "first lady", Grace Machel, watched as her husband told parliament: "In overcoming your past you offer a powerful example to people who are torn by their own divisions in all parts of this earth."

Mr Clinton added: "Two centuries ago the courage and imagination that created the United States and the principles that are enshrined in our constitution inspired men and women without a voice across the world to believe that one day they, too, could have a government of the people by the people and for the people."



Alsace offers French sanctuary to tourists fleeing Cup fever

FANCY a summer holiday in France, but not the prospect of sharing it with 2.5 million football fans? Try Alsace, which yesterday kicked off a publicity campaign touting the virtues as a World Cup-free zone, writes Jon Henley in Paris.

Alsace, in on the German border the far east, is one of the few areas of France not to host any of this summer's 64 World Cup games, which start on June 10. Alsace is making a virtue of the fact that it is 230 miles from the nearest venue.

Quake rocks central Italy

An earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale shook central Italy yesterday but no serious damage was reported. Quakes in the area last September killed 10 and badly damaged the Basilica of St Francis at Assisi. — AP.

Rebels kidnap 27

Leftwing Colombian rebels have kidnapped 27 people, including four Americans and an Italian, at a roadblock south of Bogotá, a government official said yesterday. — AP.

Rwandan killings

Suspected Hutu rebels killed five high school pupils and wounded eight others in Nkuli in north-west Rwanda, authorities said yesterday. The Tutsi-led army has been battling stepped-up rebel attacks in the area. — AP.

Tamil Tigers hit

Sri Lankan jets destroyed the Tamil Tigers' forward base at Vattachchi village, east of Parathan town yesterday, the defence ministry claimed, adding that jets also destroyed 20 rebel boats moored in north-eastern Mullattivu district. — Reuters.

Banana appeal fails

Zimbabwe's supreme court ruled yesterday that former president Canaan Banana must stand trial on sodomy charges, rejecting his appeal that pre-trial publicity had prejudiced his right to a fair hearing. — Reuters.

Press 'harassed'

The Inter American Press Association has asked Guatemala's President Alvaro Arzu to use his authority to stop an alleged government campaign to drive advertisers away from investigative news magazine Cronica. — Reuters.

PDS man dropped

Germany's Party of Democratic Socialism yesterday dropped its celebrity candidate for a key east Berlin district. Elmar Schmeling, a former West German intelligence chief, was being replaced because of a financial scandal, said the former East German Communists. — Reuters.

Cartoon turn-off

Turkey's state-run television watchdog has banned the Show TV channel from broadcasting for one day because an episode of US-made cartoon Goosebumps was "too violent". "There were elements which create fear and provoke aggression," said a spokesman. — Reuters.



Illegal immigrants leave Seminyth camp in Malaysia for forcible repatriation to Indonesia and economic turmoil. PHOTOGRAPH: UPALI ATUPURUKI

Four die in Malaysia as illegal immigrants riot

Nick Cumming-Bruce
in Bangkok

RIOTS at a Malaysian detention camp for illegal immigrants left three Indonesians and a policeman dead yesterday, exposing the problems facing Kuala Lumpur as tens of thousands of workers flee economic turmoil in Indonesia to search for work.

The deaths occurred at Seminyth camp, 25 miles from the capital, one of four into which police moved before dawn yesterday to extract hundreds of inmates for forcible repatriation. Eyewitnesses said fires broke out and shooting erupted, lasting several minutes.

A police spokesman said 38 people were also injured. A local human rights organisation, Suaram, said at least five people were killed. Police used water cannon and tear gas at another camp on the west coast against inmates who set fire to their barracks. At a camp in the south-west, around 140 inmates escaped during a deportation operation. But several hundred inmates were taken from camps to the port of Lumut and loaded on to a waiting Indonesian naval vessel.

The deportations were particularly sensitive as inmates from the troubled Aceh area of Indonesia's northern island of Sumatra were taken. The area is the subject of a ferociously suppressed movement for regional autonomy.

Human rights groups fear that some of the Acehese inmates may be genuine refugees who could face torture or worse if sent back. A spokesman for the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front in Sweden, who claimed that 24 inmates were killed in yesterday's rioting, said the Indonesian government had no choice but to resist, because "once they reach Indonesia it will be death for them."

But the Acehese are only a small part of a broader and quickly escalating problem posed for Malaysia and Singapore by tens of thousands of parts of Indonesia as the world's fourth most populous country slides deeper into economic recession and human misery.

The number of out of work in Indonesia has doubled to 8.7 million — roughly 10 per cent of the workforce — in eight months, a manpower

ministry spokesman was quoted as saying yesterday. Such bald statistics do little to reveal the hardship in a country where even in years of prosperity millions eked out a living doing odd jobs or part-time work, and where rocketing prices have put even milk beyond the reach of the poor.

The latest repatriation drive coincides with an effort by Malaysia to cut the number of foreign migrant labourers in the country. This group reportedly numbers about 3 million, of which half are Indonesians, in a workforce of about 8 million.

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Analysis Film censorship

They know what's good for you

As Lolita is passed for release Steve Busfield and Dan Glaister see how the Daily Mail wages war on Britain's censors

ONCE again the British "censor" has felt the full wrath of Middle England. The British Board of Film Classification's crime: it allowed the release of Lolita, a film which the Daily Mail does not like.

The BBFC has been upsetting the Daily Mail a good deal. Natural Born Killers, Kids, Kluge and Crash would all have been consigned to the dustbin had the newspaper, which has declared itself the guardian of the nation's morals, had its way. The Daily Mail, more than any other newspaper, has waged this war, and in its campaign against moral corruption it has found willing allies. They include the last Conservative government, and certain ministers in particular: David (now Lord) Alton, described as "the liberal liberal", the National Viewers and Listeners Association, the powerful if unrepresentative pressure group founded by Mary Whitehouse, and Family and Youth Concern, a similar organisation.

Christopher Tooke, the Mail's film critic, is used to justify the paper's pro-censorship position. Tooke's review of Lolita concluded: "Freedom of artistic expression is a great good, but not the only good — or the only freedom. None of the great defenders of free speech in the past 300 years would ever have imagined that in the late 20th century their arguments would be used to enable the spread of paedophilia and child pornography."

Almost two years ago, Tooke wrote that David Cronenberg's movie Crash should be banned "on account of immorality". The controversial film version of JG Ballard's disturbing novel about sexual relationships between car crash victims may have lost much of the author's ponderings about the strange dividing line between what is perceived as sexy (very fast cars) and what is not (road accidents). Yet Crash did provoke a challenging public debate.

The Evening Standard's

critic, Alexander Walker, said it contained "some of the most perverted acts of sexual deviance I have ever seen in mainstream cinema". The Daily Telegraph crucially ran a series of articles considering both sides of the argument, including pieces by both the paper's film critic (hostile) and JG Ballard (favourable).

The Daily Mail, however, prefers not to let ambiguity cloud its coverage. While other newspapers questioned the morality of the movie, Tooke berated the filmmakers. When more than 50 British filmmakers wrote to the BBFC pleading for Crash to be given a cinema certificate, the Daily Mail immediately demanded to know which of these signatories had seen the film. What right had they to oppose a ban when they had not seen it?

When the BBFC approved the cinematic release, the Daily Mail's focus switched to the board itself. "The move will... dramatically increase pressure for the board to be replaced with a tougher and more accountable body..."

An unnamed BBFC member was quoted as saying: "The film has been distorted by what has been said about it. People need to make up their own minds." But then David Alton countered: "I can see little point in maintaining the BBFC if it is going to allow a film like Crash into our cinemas. It effectively forfeits its right to carry on."

Then the members of the board came under fire. Twice Christopher Tooke wrote about the board's director, James Ferman. The headlines were: "Does anything appeal this man?" and "Time to sack this feeble censor".

Next it was Ferman's fellow board members: "Exposed: Secret censors who refused to put a ban on Crash... You are not entitled to know anything about the 14 censors at the BBFC... Ferman insists they are 'ordinary people whose views accurately reflect the moral climate and judgment of the nation'. Our inquiries show they are drawn largely from a narrow range of public-sector jobs — social work, teaching, the probation service, the police or academia. Are they

Censored

The BBFC does not generally publish detailed information of cuts made to films and videos. But through a combination of BBFC statements and unofficial sources, including journalists and campaigners, we can gain a fairly clear idea of specific cuts demanded. These are among films which have caused public debate:



Left: Passed for screening this week, with an 18 certificate. The Daily Mail has publicised claims "that it could encourage child sex abuse". Sex scenes avoid breaking the law by using a 19-year-old body double for the 15-year-old actress Dominique Swain. The BBFC consulted two psychiatrists who did not believe that it could exacerbate paedophile behaviour.



Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom: The 1984 Spielberg film was cut for cinema and video to gain a PG certificate. These included: - Cuts to a close-up of a heart being ripped from a chest; - The loss of the Chinese kid burning a guard's stomach with a flaming torch.



Terminator 2: Judgement Day: Cut by 17 seconds last year for video, to gain a 15 certificate. (An 18 version was also issued.) Cuts include: - Schwarzenegger's attack on the bikers loses the shot of a biker falling on to a stove; - 9.3 seconds are cut from the shooting of a SWAT team.



Shakespeare in Love: Cut for cinema with a further 9 seconds cut for video. The BBFC was concerned with "a prudent emphasis on exploitative nudity". A rape scene was cut for cinema, and further for video, "since the price of the rape could be adequately conveyed by the sight of the battered and bleeding victim".



Pulp Fiction: The video of the 1995 Tarantino film had 3 seconds reframed to gain an 18 certificate, to remove a close-up of heroin injection. The BBFC saw this as condoning heroin abuse.

apparent XXX films, the uncut, hard-core pornography refused a licence by the BBFC. It is openly on sale at less salubrious establishments.

"The black market is stronger than it ever was," says the BBFC's 1996-97 annual report, "since market forces are driving customers away from the licensed shops... but the task of reassessing the limits of legality in licensed sex shops was to provide a major challenge over the next year."

Calm, present words and

the sort of talk that could bring out the beast in the Daily Mail. For the immediate future brings new challenges that could undermine not only the BBFC but also expose the censorship system as archaic and authoritarian. Film industry analysts estimate that within three to five years the major Hollywood studios will have made the technology sufficiently affordable and available to enable viewers to download films via the Internet on to their television screens. And with the

pornography industry estimated to be worth more than Hollywood, it is inconceivable that it too does not have the technology in place. In the same way that the pornography industry found a new lease of life through video, so it could rejuvenate itself with the Internet.

The challenges to a regulatory body such as the BBFC are the same as the challenges posed to copyright by the advent of the Internet. Without the agreement of the consumer, it is extremely difficult to control who watches what, when. So where does that leave the BBFC and the Home Office's attempts at that control? Without some attempt to harmonise at least with the rest of Europe, it leaves the BBFC looking redundant.

So, redundant in the near future, and looking increasingly to be an irrelevance in the present. The same BBFC annual report reveals the astounding levels of complaint it receives. "During 1996, the board received 342 letters, 50 from students requesting information... 31 letters came from Christian groups... while 84 came from readers of the Sunday Sport

How a film is classified

The British Board of Film Classification is an independent, non-governmental body, set up by the film industry, which has assumed national responsibility for film censorship since 1912 and video since 1985. Statutory powers remain with local councils, who may overrule the BBFC's decisions. So its power is one of persuasion.

1 The first viewing

The BBFC reaches decisions by consensus. Each film is seen by two examiners, who view a mix of film and video for 5 hours a day, 24 days a week. They must agree on cuts. Specialist staff view films and videos in foreign languages. Examiners log details including: a Plot, character, outline of individual scenes; a Timings of all significant details; a Details of scenes that affect classification, eg camera angles; a Sex language. The examiners generally agree on the appropriate category.

2 If they disagree...

If the examiners disagree, the film is sent by another viewer, usually in the presence of a principal officer — who has the authority to make a decision. If the viewer is put to the test, the film is sent to the principal officer, who has the authority to make a decision.

3 Cuts

The BBFC has the power to demand cuts from a film or video. The cuts are made by the filmmaker or the distributor. The BBFC has the power to demand cuts from a film or video. The cuts are made by the filmmaker or the distributor. The BBFC has the power to demand cuts from a film or video. The cuts are made by the filmmaker or the distributor.

wanting more sex... Two letters thought it was "morally wrong" to question the existence of Santa Claus in two different films." Christopher Tooke, one imagines, is a firm believer in Santa Claus.

Source: British Board of Film Classification (1996/7 Annual Report). Detailed news of film censorship is found on a number of unofficial Websites. Among them: www.demon.co.uk (UK censorship news and details of cuts, run by Dave Taylor); www.cia.reptel.com (UK film censorship details about the BBFC's working process, run by Mike Jackson);



Decca Aitkenhead: How to behave like a pig 12

4 The film examines

All cuts are discussed and justified in a weekly report. When the film is ready to be viewed by a second examiner, they have been seen as acceptable. The board sets out all film cuts in its

5 Rejects

If a film or video is thought to break the law, eg by being obscene, so that the board feels no amount of cuts will make it acceptable, then it will be refused a certificate. Film companies may then submit the work to a local authority in the hope of a licence.

What the board looks for

The board's responsibilities include violence, swearing, sex, sexual or violent language, drugs, alcohol and public order.

When there are problems, many people feel that the board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job.

The board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job. The board is not doing its job.

http://homepages.shah.ac.uk/95/168/film/cont arts.html (detail about cuts from various films). The magazines, Derivative and Video World are also useful sources.

Graphical: Finbar Sheehy. Researcher Matt Keating. Steve Busfield is the Guardian's deputy financial news editor. In 1997 he was showcasing a reporter at the Daily Mail. Glaister is the Guardian's correspondent.

Tomorrow: JG Ballard and Anne Aldrich of the Daily Telegraph debate film censorship in The Week.

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

ALL too rarely, it is this Diary's privilege to bring to wider public attention a rare talent in local government, and today we salute Derek Boxall, Mr Boxall, a councillor in Somerset in Somerset, has put his mind to the problem of dog dirt on the streets, and come up with a solution of such brilliance that I am tempted to weep. Councillor Boxall wishes to use DNA testing to match dog with faeces. After being told by a Taunton hospital that each test costs £100, but that (as a hospital) they do not handle dog waste, he was far from disheartened. "I've contacted a lab in Bristol and a forensic lab in Cheltenham," says the councillor, "who say it'll cost £300." Almost there then. All Mr Boxall has to do now is take a hair from every dog in the area, store every one's DNA on computer, pick the turds off the streets and wait for them to match up. It seems almost too simple, but then so many of the greatest ideas are.

YET another intriguing fact comes to light about Andrew Smith, the once obscure employment figure who now enjoys a growing cult following. In 1982, Red Smith was chairman of the anti-Falklands-war campaign in Oxford. Please keep them coming.

THE comedian Mark Thomas continues a relentless persecution of his social superiors. Two years ago, for his Channel 4 show, Mark hounded Sir Evelyn de Rothschild into abandoning his 40 per cent tax deferral on an antiques collection. The deferral was conditional, under inheritance tax legislation, on it being made available for public viewing, and after Mark invited hordes of lapping philistines to see it, Sir Evelyn coughed up to keep it private. In a more recent series, the same fate befell Fatty "Nicholas" Soames and his three-tiered mahogany buffet. Now Mark is to reduce Fatty's brother Rupert to an Arthur Daily figure. Poor Rupert has been pressurised into offering the public a glimpse of his French Empire Chair... not at his home, of course (you don't want them filching up the carpets), but in the car park of the Five Arrows Hotel in Waddesdon. Anybody interested in seeing it should nip along today, between 5-7pm, or tomorrow (9.30-11.30am). Reports are welcomed.

BY way of a dangerous lure to the unknown, the Sunline Boys of the Spectator jointly consider the Guardian and Jonathan Aitken. While sane and rational Paul Johnson seeks solace in understatement, Taki George is on a sublime polemical form (at least, I think he is; I still cannot read fluently, alas, in pidgin English). At one point, Taki even mischievously turns on Paul, drawing attention to a hostile article about him in the New York Times, and to this we may return shortly. Most impressive, however, is the Cypriot's assault on this paper for its "mushy notions about criminals, drugs, promiscuity, you name it, they worship it". How very true... and by whom could the attack be more effectively made than a self-proclaimed playboy with a conviction for smuggling cocaine?

WHILE driving past the Conservative Party headquarters in Tatton, a colleague notes a curiosity. The brass plaque outside has two pieces of masking tape on it. This is clearly the act of a local vandal, and well-meaning readers in the area would probably wish to remove the tape at once.

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It's OK to behave like a pig - just blame it on the News of the Screws

Decca Aitkenhead



FOR New York women thinking of getting married, there is a service some care to take advantage of. A suspicious fiancé can hire an agency to test her intended's fidelity. The agency sends a smouldering bombshell of a siren his way one night to do her B-movie best to seduce him; if he resists, his fiancée is reassured. If he succumbs, the engagement is over.

There are all sorts of reasons why one might think this a dubious course of action. It suggests, for one, an alarming lack of trust from the outset. More to the point, only a very foolish soul would rejoice in evidence of one act of self-restraint as a life-time guarantee of monogamy. But these tend not to be the terms of most people's misgivings. Ask around, and you find a great weight of opinion which says the idea is flawed because the poor man had been "set up". His indiscretion is cancelled out. He isn't to blame for giving in to temptation - his fiancée is to blame for putting it in his way.

It was presumably this body of opinion Sir John Hall had in mind when he faced the cameras on Tuesday to announce his return to the chair of Newcastle United's board of directors. It had been a bad week or so for Sir John, what with seeing his shares in trouble and his son exposed as a repulsive little runt. One can only guess at which reputation mattered more - the family's or that of the business - but either way, an urgent dose of PR was required. So Sir John launched not an apology but a sour attack on the press.

How could they have visited such devastation on his family? How was he to explain it to a sobbing grandchild? What

had they done to deserve this? Indignation at the awful injustice of it all flowed forth. It wouldn't be enough to save his son and his friend - but it wasn't a total waste of time either. Sir John was only rehearsing a curious ethical exemption clause he's seen others use to such impressive effect of late.

When Bill Clinton's fight-back began against Monica Lewinsky, one of the words coming out of the White House was "set-up". In no time, families in hometown America began complaining about the unwelcome task of explaining oral sex and infidelity to little Tommy while the two-time news was on.

What did the media think it was doing, bringing this filth into their homes? They hadn't asked for it, for heaven's sake. The White House kept hitting that button, and within days, even in the minds of those who suspected Clinton was guilty, the Lewinsky scandal had become the fault of the press, not the president.

Mirror reporter Dawn Alford found out how opinion can turn, when in just a few days over Christmas she was transformed from a investigative journalist into a conniving vixen who had tempted an innocent teenager - poor William - into selling her drugs. Her subsequent arrest was cheered in print, even by other hacks.

It was in very different circumstances three years earlier that the former editor of the Guardian, Peter Preston, sent the infamous "cod far". His motive was higher than Alford's - to expose not a thoughtless teenager but a corrupt cabinet minister. All the same, he was censured by parliament, howled at by MPs, and accused of "ruthless arrogance" by - of all people

Lord Rees-Mogg. Vindication was some years away.

The Sunday Times endured the same sort of thing that year for approaching a selection of Tory MPs, offering them cash for questions in the House, and publishing the names of the ones who said thank you very much. "He may have been a bit naive in not checking out the man who approached him and gave him the cheque," was as far as an aide of one guilty MP would go. "I don't think he is a dishonest man." The parliamentary privileges committee declared that the paper's conduct "fell substantially below the standards to be expected of legitimate investigative journalism".

Each of these stories had a legal angle; each had a different set of arguments about means and ends. You might well feel a teenager selling a tanner drawer didn't justify subterfuge, and a politician selling favours did. Sir John Hall felt his son's treatment to be unfair because he wasn't an "MP or an arms trader" - and you can see the point he was making. But the subtext of his indignation was rounded in something else - the belief that what was said and done in Marlborough didn't actually count, because it only came out through deception.

"ENTRAPMENT" in the strict legal sense is a sacred concept. As an all-purpose get-out clause in the muddier world of general opinion, however, it is practically meaningless. You could get me blind drunk and I'd come out with all sorts of embarrassing rubbish. I'd be embarrassed if it was printed in a newspaper. But you couldn't entrap me to say black people stank or that poofs were per-

varts - nor, no matter who I thought you were, to sleep with prostitutes, slag off my friends, cheat on my boyfriend, or insult Guardian readers so appallingly that, were a transcript of the conversation printed instead of this column, I'd be forced to resign.

Where did this idea that entrapment allows ugly behaviour come from? Probably not from some muddled misunderstanding of the legal meaning of the term. Instead, it seems more like a product of our anxiety to seem media savvy. We are so laden down with knowledge of the all-powerful media that it is incumbent on anyone who wants to seem like a sensible grown-up to dismiss everything as a media get-up.

There is much irony in this. As the public world becomes a more slick, stage-managed place, the proper response is surely to mistrust the official images of everyone. Good old-fashioned stings should be celebrated. Instead, we have gone from congratulating ourselves on knowing that you can't trust everything you read in the tabloids, to becoming in danger of feeling that no misconduct exposed by an undercover operation should be fully held to account, even if it's manifestly true.

The two directors of Newcastle United did, happily, get held to account. Newcastle's fans had the wit not to be too bothered about the process by which the story was uncovered, and proved themselves considerably more media savvy than many Americans during the Lewinsky scandal. The next time a public figure is exposed, let's hope the media will not be too bothered about the process by which the story was uncovered, and proved themselves considerably more media savvy than many Americans during the Lewinsky scandal.

Letters of betrayal

Bill Buford



THE literary news in New York has been of acquisitions. The most noteworthy, of course, is the acquisition of Random House by Bertelman's. The Pierpont Morgan library has just been given a gift of rare "American literary properties" collected by Carter Burden, a New York businessman with an interest in the media who was a manuscript and book collector and, by the time of his death last year, had collected more than 30,000 such American properties, estimated to be worth many millions. Among the collection are a number of curiosities: the journal Tennessee Williams kept while writing *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* and the early poems of William Faulkner. But the prize of the collection is a package of 120 letters that Thomas Pynchon wrote to his literary agent, Candida Donadio. Pynchon is the famously reclusive author of *V*, *Gravity's Rainbow*, and *Mason & Dixon*. It's possible that we know less about him, our contemporary, than, say, Shakespeare. And now, suddenly, these letters.

They begin in 1963 and are postmarked London, Mexico, California, Texas. They are often about the business of writing, and reveal an author who, like most authors, has violent mood swings of confidence and self-doubt. At one point, after the publication of *V*, Mr Pynchon says that he is writing four different novels at once and "if they can come out on paper anything like what they are inside my head then it will be the literary event of the millennium". A little later, he wonders why he should be writing at all.

THERE are obsessions: his privacy, predictably; the movies; the man is a film nut. And a voracious reader, who is interested in the work of his peers and (an exceptional thing for an American writer) not threatened by it. Somehow, even when he was in Mexico, he was getting new novels before they were published, which he read quickly with a greedy appetite.

Pynchon is astonished by a book by John Cheever, the chronicler of the New England suburbs, as he is by a new book by Gore Vidal. And - this was a surprise for me - Pynchon is a tremendous fan of John Le Carré. And, for all his privacy and his reluctance to promote his own work, Pynchon is always generous in what he is prepared to do for other writers, especially younger ones. The letters are full of his endorsements, his "blurbs", his lines

of encouragement. They end abruptly on January 5, 1982, when Ms Donadio received the following: "As of this date, you are no longer authorised to represent me or my work. Cordially, Thomas Pynchon." Candida Donadio is curiously taciturn about the matter, claiming that she never talked about Pynchon when she represented him: "He was so terribly private." The statement, made last week, is surprising, given that she was prepared to sell a "terribly private" correspondence to Carter Burden for \$45,000. What drove Ms Donadio to break a professional commitment to confidentiality that, paradoxically, she seems to believe she is still upholding to this day, even though she had already egregiously broken it? When Mr Pynchon abandoned the services of his agent, he took up those offered by her assistant. Publishing can be a painfully intimate business; it mixes contracts and deals with the most personal matters of the soul. The heart gets involved.

My suspicion is that Ms Donadio felt betrayed on a level that was so highly charged with strong feeling that she didn't understand it herself; and the fact that the betrayal involved an assistant who would go on to become Mr Pynchon's new business partner (and was also to become his lover) reinforced the act of disloyalty. Still, it was an extraordinary thing

What if I stand on the far side of the room, without my glasses? No?

for an agent to do - analogous to a celebrity divorce lawyer handing over his most confidential notes. It's just not done.

Most of this information about Mr Pynchon's letters I got from a long conversation with a New York Times reporter named Mel Gussow. Mr Gussow is the only person - outside of the library - who has read the correspondence. He wrote an article, from which Mr Pynchon learned, for the first time, that his correspondence had been sold, and he despatched his lawyer, Jeremy Nussbaum, to see if he could get the letters back.

The letters would not be returned: they are no longer Mr Pynchon's property. But the library agreed that they would be put away until Mr Pynchon had died. Ah, snicks, I said, when I went root there last week. So I'm too late? What about a little peek?

The librarians shook their heads. Even if I take off my glasses?

No, no, they chuckled. What if I stand on the far side of the room, without my glasses, and you hold them in front of the mirror?

No, the personal correspondence of Thomas Pynchon has now disappeared. And maybe that is as it should be.

Watch out, Europe, Murdoch knows the price of everything

Rupert fingers the till

Martin Walker

in Brussels

THE coincidence was stunning. Just as 11 European nations, including Italy, were getting the economic seal of approval to join the new single currency this week, the dark prince among Euro-sceptics was caught fingering the euro till.

British attention has so far focused on Tony Blair's phone conversation with his Italian counterpart, Romano Prodi. So it should, given the way in which Labour is following the tawdry Clinton model in raising campaign funds from Bernie Ecclestone and nestling up to fat cats like Rupert.

But in Europe the question is whether, with an eye on Silvio Berlusconi's controlling share in Italy's three big privately-owned

TV networks, Rupert is going through a euro conversion. Until now, Rupert Murdoch has been a British Imperialist kind of operator, a Cecil Rhodes of print and broadcast who has put his chips on the Anglo-Saxon markets of Britain, Australia and the US, with a side bet on China via Hong Kong.

A plunge into Italian TV - however cheap at £4 billion it might look at the current sterling-lire exchange rate - would be something altogether new. It would mean not only a different culture for the Murdoch empire, but a different currency, and one poised to become the euro from January 1.

The truth is that the euro and the market it symbolises is now getting too big for any self-respecting global tycoon to ignore. Even without Britain and Sweden and Greece and Denmark, the new euro

block will account for 20 per cent of the planet's economic output, the same share as the giant US economy. It is a sacred cow, a greater share of world trade than the US, and well over twice as much as Japan.

The sheer scale of the euro project, and the per-

If Blair can do euro-deals with the media barons, so can the EU

ception that in the long run Britain may have no choice but to join, has always loomed over the arguments in the British cabinet. It now looms again in the tantalising light of Murdoch's new euro-dalliance. In the course of their various visits to Europe for the

UK presidency, Labour insiders from Gordon Brown to Peter Mandelson have found themselves explaining why the Government ducked the decision last autumn to call an early referendum on British membership of the euro.

They agree that, after Tony Blair came back from his summer holidays, the decision - which Brown called "probably the most important this country is likely to face in our generation" - was finely balanced. The Asian financial crisis gave the Government the perfect excuse to say that the global economic environment had dramatically changed since they won the election. Even Robin Cook saw that point.

There were two reasons why the case for the euro was lost. The first was that Gordon Brown did not have the Treasury behind him. The Treasury paper, UK Membership Of The Single

Currency An Assessment Of The Five Economic Tests, concluded that "the UK's economic cycle is not convergent with our European partners, and this divergence could continue for some time". That weakened Brown's hand. But then came the second factor, which weighed heavily with the media-conscious Government.

In Britain's last referendum on Europe in 1975, when a 2:1 margin against staying in at the start of the year was transformed to 2:1 in favour by referendum day, the British media were overwhelmingly in favour. That would not be the case this time. Not just the Telegraph group, but the entire Murdoch empire from Times to Sunday Times, from the Sun to the News of the World and Sky and BSB, would be battling in the last ditch to save the Queen's head on the venerable pound. "We knew it



would have been like Dunkirk," confided one Labour source.

It was a rule of thumb for Labour that Rupert was implacably opposed to the euro. They knew of Murdoch's lunch with John Major at Chequers, which has since been made public by Major's press chief Sheila Ginn.

Her version: "It was made quite clear by Murdoch and Sun editor Stuart Higgins that one prime issue on whether or not to support the Tory party was that of the single currency - the Sun would not support Major unless he ruled it out."

So the prospect of a referendum campaign with the Murdoch press and TV staying neutral or maybe even backing the euro, changes everything. If Blair can do euro-deals with Murdoch, so can Europe - if the price is right.

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Beveridge lives on

But the poor need more

WILL it be a welfare state fit for the millennium? Has the unthinkable been thought? Long before the green paper was finally published yesterday, Labour was claiming to be radically redesigning Beveridge's 50-year-old scheme. The message was clear: the old collectivism generated by the second world war's bombs, black-outs and blitz had run its course. The need now was for a more individualistic approach: "compassion with a hard edge". The Prime Minister spoke of shifting some responsibilities from public to private shoulders, signalled a desire to see social security move from a universal scheme to a safety net system, and expressed a hope that social security bills would be reduced so that there could be more money for health and education.

So is it bye bye Beveridge? Yes and no. There was no change to the main architecture in yesterday's document. National insurance contributions remain but will be simplified and reformed. Indeed, the link between work and benefits is reinforced, which will disappoint campaigners who have called for women carers — who have no earnings entitlements — to be included within the present scheme. There is no talk of affluence testing — withdrawing benefits from the better-off — and no talk, yet, of compulsory insurance contributions for long-term nursing care (under royal commission scrutiny), or extending compulsory second pension contributions (under scrutiny by a separate pension review), or even introducing a guaranteed minimum pension, as proposed by Labour's national commission on social justice, to cut means testing (still under review).

As set out yesterday, the universal system remains in place. The presentation, thankfully, has changed. Reform is no longer put forward as a cost-cutting exercise. Duties will be reciprocal: work for those who can, security for those who cannot. The woefully inadequate level of current benefits is not addressed but the severely disabled — on top of children under 11 helped by last week's budget — are promised an above-inflation increase to benefits. Future disabled claimants, although not those already in receipt of incapacity benefit, are warned that fundamental reforms are coming: there will be a tougher test, fewer will get it, but some savings will be transferred to the severely disabled. Similarly the Disability Living Allowance will not be taxed, nor means-tested, nor given to local councils, but will have a stricter eligibility test.

The big question for some anti-poverty campaigners is partly answered: is Labour transforming social security into an American-style safety-net catering purely for the poor, or will it maintain a continental model in which social security has wider purposes involving security and solidarity? Whitehall on Wednesday was talking of "high-grade safety nets". Is this Labour's "third way"? Not necessarily. In areas where benefits are meeting extra needs — children, disability and retirement — the Government is endorsing the universalists' arguments. The green paper specifically promises a universalist approach to disabled people. The basic pension remains as a foundation stone for retirement. Last week's budget provided the biggest in-

crease for another universalist allowance: child benefit. Tony Blair may have signalled his preference for a safety net but for the moment this battle has tilted towards the universalist camp. Ironically, with a government so reluctant to increase tax, the poor will only get extra help if the better-off lose some benefits or existing benefits are better targeted.

There is still plenty to fight for. Nothing is set in stone. Steve Webb, the Liberal Democrat social security specialist, wittily noted yesterday that "Labour never willingly undercuts its policies". Yet over-riding welfare reform, as earlier politicians have discovered, is a hazardous business. Radical welfare reform is needed. Labour is right to tackle dependency and deserves high praise for its huge investment in training and childcare schemes to make its ambitious welfare-to-work schemes succeed. But yesterday's green paper was too short on details, incorporated principles so broad they could encompass both the desirable and totally unacceptable structural changes, and was disappointing in its avoidance of setting unambiguous poverty-reduction targets. Yet debate has only just begun. Radical reforms on pensions, social exclusion, the Child Support Agency, housing benefit, fraud — are on their way. Let the argument begin.

Mitchell's task

Wise men must force the pace

IN A process marked by noise and loud grandstanding, the three independent chairmen of the Northern Ireland peace talks cut quite a contrast. They are quiet, efficient and virtually unseen. While the antagonists use every break in negotiation

to stride up to the cameras permanently encamped outside Stormont Castle — often undermining all the good work they have just done inside — the three statesmen keep their counsel. Former US Senator George Mitchell, retired Canadian general John de Chastelain and the Finnish ex-prime minister Harri Holkeri have won plaudits from all those following the peace process. None has been accused of bias — a remarkable achievement in the partisan climate of Northern Ireland. None has sought to play the hero. Instead they have been content to work behind the scenes, enabling the players themselves to settle their differences. They enjoy respect and even affection: Mr Holkeri apologises for his English — his fourth language — but jokes that he has picked up a nice line in Anglo-Saxon insult since taking up semi-residence in Belfast.

Now, though, the time has come for these three very wise men to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in. Senator Mitchell is quite right: "The time for discussion is over. It's now time for decision." He's equally right to suggest the Belfast crowd could happily carry on talking for two if not 20 years: some would say they've been at it for more than four centuries already.

Yet simply demanding the disputants wrap up an agreement by Good Friday might not be enough. The sleep-deprivation strategy — insisting the parties meet all day, all week, until they settle — is smart, but still lacks that extra bit of push. What's needed is for Senator Mitchell and his colleagues to step forward. They need to get out of the metaphorical chair, stop facilitating and start steering this long, tortuous process to completion. That might mean annoying a few people: knocking heads together usually does. But George Mitchell is a seasoned deal-maker: as senate majority leader, brokering honest compromise

was his stock-in-trade. He needs to call on all those skills now so that he, along with his two distinguished colleagues, win not just affection — but the gratitude of a people desperate for peace.

Quality Streets

Lifelong learning for wardens

EVEN the most velvet-tongued of Whitehall spin doctors would be pushed to raise the image of traffic wardens. They occupy a place in society lower even than estate agents. There is something about them taking out their note pads to book you for leaving your car on a yellow line that brings out the worst in people who are otherwise sane and law abiding. The fact that in some areas they have been privatised with the wardens working on commission doesn't help to sooth the simmering rage within.

The meanness of wardens is now big business. The fierce example of Westminster Council — reported to have raised over £21 million from a purge on illegal parking — is being copied by other cash-hungry councils believing they have found a modern philosopher's stone. The image of wardens will hardly improve if they have to extract yet more money from reluctant motorists. What can be done? Enter the National Vocational Qualification. Yesterday the British Parking Association (representing them not us) announced a new NVQ to teach wardens the arts of being cool in emergencies and defusing volatile situations (while putting the ticket on with the other hand). If they can do that the NVQ should be elevated to degree status. They would truly have a way of turning base passions into gold.

Letters to the Editor

Lessons of the Lawrence case

PAUL Foot suggests the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry should take account of cases such as Allison Moore's (Racist terror at the door, March 26). Sir William Macpherson's inquiry is in two parts. It is presently concentrating on the matters which arose directly from the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The second part, to examine the lessons to be learned for the future investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crime, provides an ideal opportunity for other cases to be considered. Stephen Wells, Secretary to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, London.

SARAH Bosseley continues to perpetuate the myth (Selling The Miracle, G2, March 26) that the "pierced and tattooed" Kathy Acker chose to undergo mastectomy "as an expression of what she called her body art". It seems difficult for some commentators to let go of the glib notion that Acker sacrificed her life for post-human rebel chic. The rather more mundane fact is Kathy Acker sacrificed her breasts because she wanted to live. Charles Shear Murray, London.

PENELOPE Fitzgerald does not write "gentle historical fiction" (Tn a literary star, so no irony, March 25) and I don't think anyone would dream of saying so if she were a young man of 30 instead of an old woman in her eighties. She writes astonishing, brilliant, sharp, funny, tragic and powerful books that are very short and entirely wonderful. Liz Manderville, Lewes.

WAS your report (Saddam Anthrax plot warning, March 26) eight days premature? Peter Lack, London.

Beating about the bush

FRIITZ Speigl may be technically correct about Shakespeare's open use of our "unlovely monosyllables" (Letters, March 26), but the bard was not averse to using imagery just as rude as the use of "fuck" appears to be. To Mr Blunkett, no GCSE student of Hamlet will miss the thinly disguised C-word in "Do you think I meant country matters?" Nor do year-9 Sets students miss the "prick of noon" in Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare could not have used the F-word because it apparently was not introduced into English (from Dutch) until the 17th century, when it primarily meant "to beat". There was a bird named the windfucker in 18th-century ornithological texts. The sexual connotations seem to have arisen soon after in line with the use of the word "bang" for the same activity. Would Blunkett have the same objection to a play called Shopping and Banging? Anthony Parcell, Chelmsford.

ALTHOUGH Shakespeare may not have used any "unlovely monosyllables" directly, he alluded indirectly but unmistakably to several: "Then came each actor on his heels" (Hamlet, "These are her Cs, her Us, and her Ts and thus makes she her great Ps").

(Twelfth Night): "Pistol's cock is up" (Henry V); and so on. Nicholas Walker, London.

TOOK Fritz Speigl's advice and cut a Granny Smith in half from the top. Did he really mean that Shakespeare's Juliet had five black pigs and a maggot inside her? John Sheeran, Cheltenham.

FRIITZ Speigl is rocky on mediators. According to Jane Grigson their ancient name was "openers". The French called them *trou de chies*. The reason is nothing to do with what they reveal when cut open; not easy because of the large seeds. If you look at the base of a medlar fruit where it flowered you will see that dog's are an accurate and descriptive name. Shakespeare implies that young women gave it a name more personal to them. Michael Croucher, Bristol.

DAVID Blunkett feels great care needs to be taken before public money is spent on things which push the boundaries of respectability ("Ministers in culture clash, March 26). I presume he would have agreed with the popular opinion of the time that Ibsen's A Doll's House should not have

been supported, or that Osborne's Look Back in Anger was pushing "the boundaries of respectability" in 1956. Perhaps he believes that public money should only be spent on cossetting and supporting the cultural status quo and not to challenge the social and political agenda. But I thought that was New Labour's mission? What is he going on about? Stephen Daldry, Artistic Director, Royal Court Theatre, London.

SOCIETY wants teachers to criticise obscene and insulting language and accept that obligation. Even playwrights and journalists and their children are to be civil and not to swear gratuitously. I object to the title "Shopping and Banging", though I am willing to accept that its content is legitimate. Offensive, aggressive swear words are a form of violence in our society. I urge editors to say: "No, I will not use unacceptable language in my newspaper." Terry Ayres, Epsom, Cranbourne School, Basingstoke.

Does Mr Blunkett derive his knowledge of Shakespeare from Thomas Bowdler's 1818 edition, The Family Shakespeare? Frank Regan, Cheshire.



Mayor will be chain round our neck

SO THE Guardian has joined in telling us an elected mayor is a good idea. You also conform in giving no evidence for saying so. But there are powerful grounds for thinking the opposition from Ken Livingstone is justified. An elected mayor would emphasise the worst aspects of our pseudo-democracy — a superficial judgments of personalities with whom we are not really familiar and a trivial one-in-5 million vote which makes it hardly worthwhile to think let alone keep informed. It will also lead to excessive

concentration of power on a convenient placeman, and be contrived to confine it to suitably well-mannered candidates. It will facilitate corruption. Indeed, the agenda hidden behind the proposal is to reinforce the stranglehold that big business development has over the real interests of the populace. If democracy is so desirable, why do we not have a referendum on the Domes? Simply because that would not be convenient for those making large fortunes from it. Robert Clarke, Birmingham.

Below grade

SO AN average difference of more than one grade per subject in the A-level papers in 1997 and 1998, according to independent and comprehensive schools is "tiny" (School fees by status gain, March 26). But institutionalise those different average scores and there is a big difference between schools. Scoring an average 16.5 A-level points and 23.1. The nation and many children got value for money from the assisted places scheme, which the Government abolished. Sooner or later, the issue of giving low-income families access to excellent schools will have to be revisited. Richard Davison, Independent schools information Service, London.

Prison powers

ALTHOUGH prison boards of visitors were stripped of their formal disciplinary powers in 1992 (Letters, March 26), they are still responsible for authorising the segregation of prisoners for periods of longer than three days. BOVs vary greatly, but many simply rubber stamp decisions made by the prison governors. The use of segregation is possibly of more concern than the disciplinary process as it can continue indefinitely with no proper system of appeal, and the effects of long-term segregation are severe. It is perhaps for this reason that prisoners have so little confidence in the watchdog role of BOVs. Simon Creighton, Prisoners' Advice Service, London.

Bully the boarding schools to cut down misery and fear

I WAS at a secondary boarding school for four years and recognise much of what George Monbiot describes in his article (Brutality in the dorm, March 26). But he fails to mention that school authorities seldom take bullying as seriously as they do other offences. At my school, one boy was expelled and another suspended for possessing small amounts of cannabis. Yet boys were allowed to assault others for no reason other than that these others were "mouthy". Moreover, they would get away with these assaults.

It appeared that the worst one could do was to offend against a particular set of middle-class, middle-England values. It didn't seem to matter how one treated other boys, as long as one didn't forget to call teachers "sir" and to stand when they walked into a room. But I would not advise that we close down all boarding schools. There are residential

special schools, including those for the handicapped, which do valuable work. For the rest, however, boarding schools are thoroughly reactionary and have skewed priorities. They inculcate respect for authority though not respect for people as people. It is these institutions that ought to be abolished. Matthew J Smith, Aberystwyth.

WHY is it that George Monbiot is a voice crying in the wilderness? If the intimidation and violence that are just accepted as ordinary life in boys' boarding schools went on in a children's home, there would be a national outcry. Let's leave the clean-up on the streets till later. If we really want to make the massive cuts in misery and fear in society now, let's go for zero tolerance in boarding schools. John Evans, Southampton.

Prague Writers' Festival 1998

The 8th Prague Writers' Festival presents a selection of the authors from the Czech Republic and around the world. Meet them at the Franz Kafka Centres, Old Town Square, at 7 pm from 20 to 25 April.

Monday 20 April Lawrence Ferlinghetti Antigone Kefau Michael March Josef Topol	City Lights USA USA Czech Republic
Tuesday 21 April Martin Amis Brian Patten Per Olov Enquist Isabel Fonseca	British Day Great Britain Great Britain Sweden USA
Wednesday 22 April Pedro Tamen Mário Souza Mia Couto Germano Almeida Tahar Ben Jelloun Miroslav Holub	Portuguese-Language Day Portugal Brazil Mozambique Cape Verde Morocco Czech Republic
Thursday 23 April Lilian Faschingher Robert Menasse Claudio Magris Ludvík Vaculík	Austrian Day Austria Austria Italy Czech Republic
Friday 24 April Robert Creeley John Banville Dante Maraini Rhea Galarraga Mila Haugová Viera Prokešová Daniela Fischerová	For Bohumil Hrabal USA Ireland Italy Greece Slovakia Slovakia Czech Republic
Saturday 25 April Ryszard Krynicki Andrzej Szczypiorski György Petri	Polish Day Poland Poland Hungary

The Festival is dedicated to Bohumil Hrabal. Patron: the City of Prague. For further details, please contact the Prague Writers' Festival Foundation, Staroměstské nám. 22, Prague 1 tel/fax + 420 2 24 21 30 30

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Up Yours (and Yours)

Bel Littlejohn

"VE got one helluva lot of time for Jim Boyce, the dynamic and far-sighted new boss of the new-look Radio 4. He's dusted off a lot of cobwebs, blown away a lot of loose baggage and ironed a huge number of shirts — and he's come up with a brilliant new schedule that's not only radical but reforming as well. His changes are far-reaching

and all-embracing. Desert Island Discs is to be increased by 10 minutes. Today is to run an extra half-hour. Instead of the daily arts programme Kaleidoscope, there's a brand new programme, Scope, that promises to take a fresh daily look at the arts. We're talking brave, we're talking bold, we're talking shake-up. And that's not all. Start the Week and Midweek have been given a thorough repackaging by reducing the number of guests from five to four and, in a typically bold twist, keeping on their original presenters.

But boldest and most far-reaching of all is the new, thoroughly revamped consumer rights prog You and Yours, to be presented by someone with a proven track record of years of experience in the field, namely myself. It will now run to an hour every day — far-reaching change reflected in its new-look title:

You and Yours and Yours and Yours. We aim to include the very best from all the other consumer and minority programmes of recent years, among them (sub check) for the hard of hearing. All Steamed Up for people who are suffering from faulty kettles, saucers or other kitchenware problems. Most Go Now! the five-minute slot for people who suffer from compulsive phone-in disorder, and At Issue, the lively magazine programme for sufferers from the common cold.

We unveiled the first in the new series of You and Yours and Yours and Yours in a special presentation in the Serpentine Gallery yesterday. Why the Serpentine? Because it is situated in London's Hyde Park, the subject of a major special investigation in the months ahead. As I explained to the assembled media yesterday, we were first alerted to the perils lying

in wait for the unwary Hyde Park consumer by a post bag of letters from ordinary listeners, such as Mrs TB Clegg from Knebworth, Herts.

Mrs Clegg explained that she has an occasional allergy to grass. "The last time I visited Hyde Park," she continued, "I was shocked and horrified by the amount of grass that the authorities let grow there, without any apparent concern for the safety of those of us who suffer from medical allergies. I saw no warning signs at all, and no skilled medical staff at hand to deal with the consequences of the authorities' stubborn indifference to the plight of a sorely tried section of the community."

On closer investigation, we were to discover that an undisclosed number of other citizens had their own horror stories about this park. Mr D Ranken of Boodle telephoned our Emergency Complaint

Hotline to inform us that, in the process of conducting his own personal researches, he had come across a very large stretch of lake-effect water in Hyde Park. "There were no signs to tell the public — including many under-age kiddies — that this water was unsuitable for drinking," he pointed out. "Nor had the relevant authorities made any provision whatsoever for those pedestrians, who might wish to walk across this sizeable stretch of water. I can only imagine the distress this unwelcome lake might cause an elderly lady with a faulty hip as she attempted to take a short cut across the park, only to find herself knee-deep in damp water. The Government must bring in immediate legislation to resolve this urgent matter for once and for all."

Ms P Roberts from Solihull was similarly concerned about the "quite appalling" number of large trees she had observed standing entirely stationary in Hyde Park, many of them with potentially lethal foliage. "A leaf is a potential killer. As few as six to seven soggy leaves blown by the wind through the open mouth and into the throat of an otherwise able-bodied human being can choke him or her to death, with heavy funeral expenses not to mention legal bills for the rest of his grieving family."

In response to these deeply upsetting letters, we on the new-look You and Yours and Yours and Yours today launch a hard-hitting ParkAlert campaign to draw the attention of ordinary citizens to your statutory rights if and when you suffer untold damage from public parks up and down the country. For this and all the other grim warnings you may require I urge you: stay tuned.

An actor for all seasons



But it was Massey's work with the national companies over the next two decades that brought the best out of him. He joined the National Theatre in the late 1970s, playing Don Juan in von Horvath's *Don Juan comes back from the War*, the deceived

Magister but poor performance. Massey made many appearances on television, including an adaptation of Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* and Christopher Hampton's original TV film, *Able's Will*. He also pulled off the difficult feat of playing his own godfather in Robert Wise's ill-fated 1968

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a heavily textured, patterned fabric, possibly a rug or tapestry. The image features intricate floral and geometric designs, with a dense, dark background and lighter, detailed patterns. The texture is very rough and fibrous, with deep shadows and bright highlights creating a dramatic, almost abstract effect. The pattern includes stylized flowers, leaves, and swirling motifs. The overall composition is a close-up, focusing on the intricate details of the fabric's texture and design.

Stagestruck . . . Massey as Argan in Molière's *The Hypochondriac* PHOTOGRAPH: NOBEY CLARK

film about Gertrude Lawrence, *Star!* for which he was nominated for an Oscar. He went out to Les Avants to study Coward's mannerisms and the original was pleased with the result saying: "Danny Massey is excellent as me, and had the sense to give an impression of me rather than try to imitate me."

Throughout his career, Massey was an actor of taste

and sensibility. But he also seemed to get better and richer with the years as he came to rely less on his thoroughbred charm and more on his skill at delving into character. He had a light voice but a true musical ability to shape a phrase or paragraph, which made him a natural for Shaw and gave his Shakespearean work real colour. Married three times,

first to Adrienne Corri, then to Penelope Wilton and, most recently, to her sister, Lindy. He was an actor of real class and wide range, who bore his final, wasting illness with dignity and fortitude.

Michael Billington
Daniel (Raymond) Massey, actor, born October 10, 1933; died March 26, 1998

Learning to dance to the music of time

In the late 1960s, St Mark's became the focus of avant-garde music curricular developments achieved through Rainbow's insight in building a music curriculum that was not based on music lectures, a catalyst for changes that would revolutionise the country's music education. A climate began to develop that encouraged music educators to recognise the importance of the social impulses might be channelled into their own musical improvisations and compositions as a part of general education. And it was during this period that Rainbow met WE Curwen, a music educator and curriculum developer that eventually led to the formation of the Curwen Institute, of which he



Rainbow... sense of vision

Fittingly, it was at Trinity College of Music, London, where he had first registered as a part-time student, that, three years ago, he was awarded an honorary fellowship and in 1992, the University of Leicester presented him with the degree of doctor of letters.

Despite his recent stroke, Rainbow relearned the skills of writing and keyboard playing, and was at work on his memoirs when he died. Rainbow, and his wife Olive, whom he outlived by two years, leave no descendants, but his estate is to be invested in the **Bernarr Rainbow Award Scheme** established to support the **postgraduate research of practising music teachers.**

Anthony Kemp
Bernarr Rainbow, musicologist,
born October 2, 1914; died March
17, 1986

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

COMPUTER SHOPPER

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BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING COMPUTER MAGAZINE

Put out the word on poverty

Sumption's early **Oxfam** advertisements might seem crude by today's standards, but they were effective and revolutionised charity advertising. Deliberately artless, they shocked with their direct depiction of human need.

A Devon farmer's son, his career began in the 1930s with unpaid work experience at a London advertising agency. A wartime conscientious objector, he returned to

Little in today's fund-raising repertoire was not tried first by Sumption. The computerised mailing list and the trading catalogue had their primitive beginnings in Oxford; charity pop promo-

IN 1979, he co-founded the International Fundraising Workshop in Holland, which has become the principal forum for charities and voluntary organisations to exchange their fundraising and marketing experience. In

John Hambley
Harold Sumption, advertising executive and fund-raiser, born November 16, 1916; died March 12, 1987.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE. An envelope from Maff dropped through our letterbox at The Droppings last week. Headed "Clean livestock – everyone's responsibility", it focused on cleanliness in the meat supply chain, and I could not disagree with a word. Clearly BSE and *E.coli* have concentrated minds wonderfully in parts where they never get dung on their boots. We did a pre-lambing worming and dogging exercise on the flock not because the Meat Hygiene Service was anxious that we

should but because it is part of the annual cycle. Next weekend, they will all get their heptovac injection too. Hermione, who always lambs first, was clearly in trouble and her condition was directly relevant to the matters addressed by the mailing on clean livestock. The start of the worm cycle, probably early this year, meant that she showed signs of an abdominal worm burden and was soiled and in poor condition. We dosed her two mornings running with the blue drench.

which is the most dependable stopper and, with the rest of the flock, she also has a lot of panacur, which is usually a dependable worm control with seven-day limits on human consumption of both meat and milk. I'm relevant only to the small numbers of cheese-makers who use milk in an effort to emulate Roquefort. Cleaning a ewe that is heavily dung-soiled is a job which takes soap, water, dagging shears and 15 minutes of your time. I wonder if the authors of the Maff leaflet know the malodorous reality of the care they could be taking.

Robert Bauman, chairman, British Aerospace, 67; Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC, barrister and author, 72; Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, former Labour prime minister, 86; Maria Ewing, opera singer, 48; Duncan Goodhew, swimmer, 41; Mstislav Rostropovich, cellist and conductor, 71; Admiral Sir Jock Slater, First Sea Lord, 60; Prof Margaret Stacey, sociologist, 76; Quentin Tarantino, film director, 85; Cyrus Vance, US statesman, 81; Terry Yorath, football manager, 48.

DYNO-ROD: An item in a News in brief column, headed Dyno-Rod men admit concealing evidence, Page 19, March 24, contained a number of errors, the most serious of which was reflected in the headline. The two men involved did not admit having concealed any evidence during the High Court action brought against Dyno-Rod by Rentokil. The information referred to was temporarily and inadvertently lost. This was accepted by the court and

It was for this that Dyno-Rod tendered an apology. Dyno-Rod is not a US company. It was founded in Britain in 1963. The company director referred to in the report is Clive Smith, not Chris Smith. The total paid by Dyno-Rod Developments Ltd to Rentokil in initial damages and costs, in an out-of-court settlement, was £12 million. We would like to apologise to Dyno-Rod for the mistakes in this report.

19, referred to the opening of the Yves St Laurent Room at the National Gallery. His surname is Saint Laurent. The Saint should never be abbreviated.

IN OUR Commons sketch, Page 2, March 20, the words, "The danger will be in the juices!" were attributed to Jack Cunningham. They were, in fact, uttered by Jeff Rooker.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning

OTOOLE, Terrence, suddenly on 23rd March. Much loved husband of Sheila and loving father of Jane. Funeral at St. Mary's home Crematorium, East End Road, Finchley, on Tuesday 31st March at 2.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations if desired to British Heart Foundation, c/o Leytons & Sons Ltd, 1 Denmark Terrace, 40 Finsbury Green N2 6HS.

WILL to place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4687 or fax 0171 713 4123 between 9am and 3pm Monday

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PolyGram rocked by late albums



THE unpredictability of creative artists like All Saints (pictured) caused PolyGram to warn yesterday that first quarter profits will be savaged, writes Lisa Buckingham.

A number of its top acts have failed to issue

albums. Although the Motown 40th anniversary compilation album has hit the streets, the first three months' results will hardly benefit from the delayed releases of All Saints and Pulp. In contrast, this time last year PolyGram

released a US album which sold 5 million copies and also had another clutch of million-plus sellers. The investors' kneejerk reaction wiped 11 per cent from the company's value.

Only last month, when PolyGram unveiled its 1997 profits, chief executive Alan Levy predicted that group would manage to shrug off the worst of the Asian crisis.

But yesterday, he said that, although sales levels would be in line with last year's strong first quarter, profits would be "sharply lower". He admitted that provisions for bad debts in Asia had been increased.

Mr Levy did caution last month that the group faced a potentially lacklustre first half, with most of its earnings excitement weighted towards the end of the year.

Yesterday he said that nothing in the group's recent performance suggested that full year results would be lower than last year's £358 million.

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

Major saw the poverty gap cut

Rowntree report overturns conventional belief on trend, Mark Atkinson writes

THE gap between rich and poor started to narrow in the last few years of the Tory Government, according to a report due out next week.

The report, to be published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, will disclose that the trend towards widening income inequality established during the Thatcher years of the 1980s started to go into reverse during John Major's administration.

"The eighties have stopped," said the report's author, John Hills, head of the London School of Economics' centre for the study of social exclusion.

Although the new figures for 1993-95 are not as conclusive proof that the long term trend toward rising inequality is over, they are certain to fuel criticism of the assumptions underpinning government policy, and underline the need for accurate statistics on which to base social policy.

In the Government's Green Paper on welfare, published yesterday, the Prime Minister said rising inequality, along with fraud and work disincentives, was one of the three main reasons requiring reform of the present system.

Conservative employment spokesman David Willetts, commenting on the Rowntree report, said: "It looks as if Labour's welfare policies rest on a false premise and that income differentials are nar-

rowing." He added: "This also calls into question some of the more ambitious theories about globalisation driving widening income differentials."

The Government believes that globalisation and rapid technological change have indeed increased the wages on offer to skilled workers at the expense of unskilled labour.

Next week's report is an update of the foundation's inquiry into income and wealth, published amid intense controversy in February 1995.

The original report discovered that the gap between rich and poor grew dramatically after 1979, becoming wider than any recorded since 1945.

It found that between 1979 and 1992 the poorest 20-30 per cent of the population failed to benefit from economic growth despite the supposed "trickle-down effect" in contrast to the earlier post-war period.

The growth of such inequality was faster in the UK than in any other country except New Zealand.

The inquiry team - which included the then head of the Confederation of British Industry, Howard Davies - found multiple causes for the gap, including more dependence on benefits for single parents and unemployed people, and a widening difference between earnings and benefits income.

Orange sale sets up BAe

David Gow
Industrial Editor

BRITISH Aerospace yesterday drove into pole position to lead the shake-out in Europe's defence industry by raising £764 million for acquisitions through the sale of the bulk of its stake in Orange, the mobile phone network.

BAe, already sitting on a cash-pile of £750 million, is expected to net up to £500 million extra last year by offloading its property development arm, Arlington, as it concentrates its activities on its core civilian and military aerospace business.

BAe's move came just days before it, France's state-

owned Aérospatiale and Germany's Dasa, Europe's three premier companies, are due to submit a joint plan to restructure Europe's civilian and military aerospace industries to their respective governments.

The three are still battling over the trilateral plan and City analysts cautioned yesterday against expectations of a swift European realignment on the scale of the recent mergers in the US, even though BAe's chief executive Sir Dick Evans is a long-standing protagonist of the pan-European defence company.

Company executives similarly point out that 14 American defence firms are chasing \$250 billion a year in Penta-

gon contracts while 45 European companies are fighting for a budget half the size.

"BAe is bound to look to Europe for growth but it's not the only game in town," said Peter Caldwell of Nikko Europe. "If things are progressing too slowly there are other irons in the fire, notably in the US."

Shares in GEC, BAe's British rival, have recently surged on hopes that the two will revive plans for a merger that collapsed in the mid-1990s, with the emphasis now on GEC's lucrative defence electronics arm, Marconi.

But this is thought unlikely as, under its new managing director, Lord Simpson, GEC has yet to complete its own restructuring - via acquir-

ing Siemens' minority stake in their joint telecoms unit, GPT, floating a large part of power engineer GEC-Alsthom. Its joint venture with Alcatel, and deciding on the future of its white goods subsidiary.

Instead, the City expects BAe to look for acquisitions or partnerships on a smaller scale such as with Germany's Rheinmetall in land-based armoured systems or with Italy's Alenia in defence electronics.

The sale of BAe's Orange stake began late on Wednesday in New York after SBC Warburg won an auction to place 138 million shares. They were all sold to institutions in the US, Europe and the Middle East by the end of yesterday, the largest block one of 17 million to a single institution.

BAe's retention of a 5 per cent stake is seen as preserving its links with Li Ka-shing, chief of Hutchison Whampoa, Orange's main shareholder.

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ing Siemens' minority stake in their joint telecoms unit, GPT, floating a large part of power engineer GEC-Alsthom. Its joint venture with Alcatel, and deciding on the future of its white goods subsidiary.

Instead, the City expects BAe to look for acquisitions or partnerships on a smaller scale such as with Germany's Rheinmetall in land-based armoured systems or with Italy's Alenia in defence electronics.

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TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS			
Australia 2.429	Germany 2.984	Malaysia 6.04	Singapore 2.83
Austria 2.086	Greece 323.80	Malta 0.641	South Africa 6.11
Belgium 61.35	Hong Kong 12.61	Netherlands 3.348	Spain 251.45
Canada 2.222	India 55.25	New Zealand 2.50	Sweden 19.01
Cyprus 0.885	Ireland 1.152	Norway 12.54	Switzerland 2.454
Denmark 11.405	Israel 6.01	Portugal 304.08	Turkey 385.010
Finland 9.193	Italy 2.959	Saudi Arabia 6.16	USA 1.698
France 9.97			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shilling and dollar)

Investors dial up big profits

Nicholas Bannister looks at the rich rewards reaped from the phone market

EARLY investors in mobile phone companies have made a killing as operators have seen spectacular growth over the past several years.

British Aerospace paid \$55 million for its 21.12 per cent holding in Orange. The 5 per cent stake it is retaining after yesterday's \$764 million share sale is itself worth about \$237 mil-

lion. But it is not alone in reaping rich rewards.

Vodafone, the country's largest mobile operator, quickly outgrew its parent, the Rascal defence electronics business.

Rascal raised \$320 million by floating 20 per cent of Vodafone in 1988. In 1991 the rest of the Vodafone shares were returned to Rascal's shareholders in what

was then Britain's largest corporate demerger.

The deal valued Vodafone at about \$3 billion - more than the rest of the Rascal businesses put together. Today it has a stock market value of more than \$18 billion.

Cellnet, Britain's second largest mobile network, has been a money-spinner for Securicor, which invested \$4 million in 1994 in return for a 40 per cent stake. Analysts estimate that Securicor could now raise between £1.6 billion and £2 billion if it sold its Cellnet shares.

British Telecom, which owns the rest of Cellnet, would love to buy them but is prevented by current legislation.

Securicor is prepared to sell if the price is right. It is not hard to see why. The limited-function mobile networks based on CT2 technology all failed. The last, Rabbit, was controlled by the Hong Kong group that launched Orange.

four mobile phone companies. One 2 One, which is growing rapidly, is now thought to be worth several billion pounds.

Not all the early mobile ventures were goldmines. The limited-function mobile networks based on CT2 technology all failed. The last, Rabbit, was controlled by the Hong Kong group that launched Orange.

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Standard Life Annual General Meeting

The 172nd Annual General Meeting of the Standard Life Assurance Company will be held in Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh on Tuesday 28 April 1998 at 2.30pm.

A member entitled to attend and vote is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote. A proxy need not be a member.

By order of the Board of Directors
Marcia Campbell
Secretary
Edinburgh, 26 March 1998

Policyholders may obtain a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, including the agenda, by writing to the Customer Service Information Team at PO Box 141, 1 Tanfield, Edinburgh EH3 5RG or by telephoning 0845 60 60 070. Proxy forms may be similarly obtained by members entitled to vote.

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FinanceGuardian

Asia stops buying British • Trade gap balloons • Pound at nine-year high

Recession clouds horizon

Larry Elliott
and Mark Atkinson

FEARS that Britain's hard-pressed manufacturing sector is on the brink of recession were fuelled as the soaring pound and crashing exports to South-east Asia sent the trade deficit ballooning last month.

Today the Confederation of British Industry warns of "clouds darkening the economic horizon" on news that exports to Thailand, South Korea and Malaysia halved over the past year.

Sales of British goods to Thailand are down by 50 per cent, to South Korea by 51 per cent and to Malaysia by 44 per cent, exacerbating a downward spiral in the trade figures since early 1997.

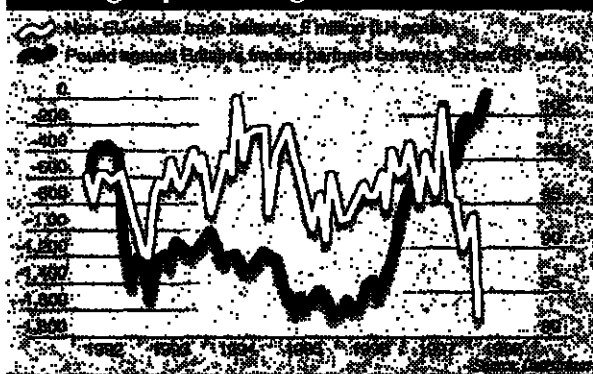
Michael Saunders, econo-

mist with Salomon Smith Barney, said the loss of markets in crisis-torn Asia, combined with a 9 per cent jump in imports since early 1997, means "the trade balance with these countries has risen by about \$150 million per month from a year ago, adding to the squeeze from the high pound".

With sterling shrugging off the figures and surging to a nine-year high last night of 3.0746 German marks, Treasury officials admitted that they are unable to bring any respite to exporters through a cheaper currency.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics yesterday showed that last month Britain was in the red to the tune of \$1.6 billion with countries outside the European Union. This was double the deficit expected by the City and the largest shortfall on record.

Taking a pounding



Part of the worsening trend was due to one-off trade in so-called erratic items such as precious stones and aircraft, but ONS officials said the underlying picture was of a widening deficit.

port volumes, by contrast, are rising steadily. Sudhir Jumanekar, the CBI's associate director of economic analysis, said: "These are difficult times for British manufacturers."

"Sterling's continued strength and concerns about the impact of the Asian economic crisis are undoubtedly having a dampening effect on export demand."

Factories are cutting prices to find customers for their goods, according to today's CBI monthly industrial trends survey.

Only 22 per cent of manufacturers say their order books are above normal for the time of year, against 24 per cent who report that they are below par. Export order books provide an even gloomier picture, with just 14 per cent of firms saying they are above normal against 45 per

cent saying they are below normal. Treasury officials giving evidence yesterday to the Commons Treasury select committee hearing on the Budget acknowledged that there was a risk of manufacturing sliding into recession this year.

Chancellor Gordon Brown's forecasts are for industrial output to rise at best by 0.5 per cent in 1998, but Christopher Kelly, the Treasury's head of economic briefing and analysis, conceded that the outcome could be worse.

"We are not forecasting manufacturing recession but it must be a possibility... Manufacturing is going through a difficult period. Activity or growth this year will be weak or virtually non-existent and therefore it could be above or below zero. We can't rule it out."

Notebook

Share price cut makes a poor fit



Edited by Mark Milner

In the balance

NEXT'S management must be feeling very bruised this morning. Yesterday it went to the City with a modestish message. This season at least it should have been better sticking to its classic lines than ostensibly more fashionable wear.

It had under-ordered best-selling lines. As a result profits would be down. But this was just a hiccup. Come autumn it would be business as usual.

City reaction was savage, however. More than \$550 million was wiped off Next's stock market value. It could get worse. Unless the price picks up, Next will drop out of the Footsie 100. That would mean selling from funds which track the index.

Some of yesterday's response must have been driven by worries that Next's problems run deeper than the fickleness of fashion. There are genuine concerns that the economy will slow and with it high street spending. The company's late-1990s post-boom problems may have added to City jitter.

Nonetheless, a £1.57 fall in the share price in a single day looks excessive. If fundamentals not fashion were the issue, why so precipitate a

reaction? Such a fall looks like sudden panic, not a considered response to a developing situation.

It is hard to avoid concluding that anyone who punctures the present stock market euphoria is in for a hammering. And that the City's trading system tends to exaggerate price movements. Even so, that was some hiccup.

BRITAIN'S balance of payments is tipping in the wrong direction.

February's trade deficit with countries outside the European Union was a whopping \$1.6 billion, the largest on record. As the Confederation of British Industry put it yesterday, there are clouds darkening the economic horizon.

Yesterday's figures provide a graphic illustration of the impact of the financial crisis in Asia last year. Then the headlines were grabbed by tumbling stock markets and collapsing currencies. Now the impact of the crisis is rushing through into real economies. Economic activity in the region is slowing so too is Asia's appetite for imports.

Britain's sales to Thailand and South Korea have halved. But Britain's trade problems are not confined to Asia. Looming ever larger is the strength of the pound. A growing trade deficit should have a depressing effect on sterling. Tell that to the foreign exchange markets. Yesterday sterling was above DM3.07. Not only does that make exports expensive, it makes imports cheaper, too.

Copper rogue jailed for 8 years

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

ROGUE trader Yasuo Hamanaka began an eight-year prison sentence yesterday for his pivotal role in the \$2.6 billion Sumitomo copper scandal. Hamanaka — who once dominated world trading in the red metal — had pleaded guilty to charges of fraud and forgery.

His unauthorised deals threatened the existence of Sumitomo and created chaos in the copper market, according to presiding Judge Yoshifumi Asayama.

Hamanaka's activities dwarfed those of speculator Nick Leeson, whose \$200 million-plus secret gambles brought down Barings Bank in 1995, and embroiled in scandal the London Metal Exchange, through which the Sumitomo trader carried out many of his deals.

Judge Asayama said: "He used every means to conceal his unauthorised deals... It was a vicious, complex crime." The discovery of Sumitomo's enormous losses in June 1996 set alarm bells ringing about commodities regulation and caused the price of a tonne of copper to plunge within a month from \$2,800 to \$1,750, from which it has yet to recover.

When the scandal broke, Hamanaka, who lived in a Tokyo suburb, was described as an unlikely perpetrator of one of the biggest financial scandals in history. Colleagues called him a quiet

man who was devoted to his company and his family.

The court heard, however, that, as well as conducting covert trades over 11 years from 1985, the 50-year-old enjoyed gambling and stashed hundreds of thousands of dollars in a Swiss bank account.

Claims that Sumitomo and Hamanaka conspired with other firms to manipulate international copper prices are still under investigation in Britain and the United States.

Sumitomo president Kenji Miyahara described the sentence as fair and appropriate. In February, the company filed a civil lawsuit against Hamanaka and his former boss, Saburo Shimizu, seeking 736 million yen (\$3.3 million) in damages.

Judge Asayama was scathing in his comments about Sumitomo's weak internal supervision, however, saying the company failed to avert the crisis because it put too much emphasis on profits.

Hamanaka's lawyers, who had sought a lenient sentence on the grounds that Sumitomo's risk-management system was also at fault, said they were considering an appeal.

Another member of the London Metal Exchange received a \$50,000 fine yesterday for failing to report large holdings purchased between October 1996 and June last year. The Exchange's Disciplinary Committee said Deutsche Sharp's Plakley Metals Ltd breached rules by neglecting to report the holding and failing to train properly staff involved in the transactions.



Judgment day... Yasuo Hamanaka, flanked by lawyers, enters Tokyo District Court for sentencing

Anger as managers clean up in Thames Trains buy-out

Government powerless to prevent bonanza. KEITH HARPER reports

ANOTHER privatised rail company was taken over yesterday with the certainty that its senior managers have made big profits from the \$6.1 million sale.

Nearly 70,000 £1 shares owned by six managers and staff involved in the buy-out of Thames Trains, which operates local services from Paddington station, are expected to be bought.

Some of the managers will be better off by hundreds of

thousands of pounds, while a thousand members of staff will make up to £300 each.

John O'Brien, the rail franchise director, yesterday approved the takeover of the Thames Franchise by the Go-Ahead group. It already has a majority holding in the franchise and will buy back 34.8 per cent of shares held by management and staff.

Mr O'Brien said he had taken the decision to approve after securing commitments

for \$1 million of improvements. These include a new through service between Oxford and Bristol and improved compensation arrangements.

The deputy prime minister, John Prescott, was sceptical about the deal, but said there was nothing he could do about it. He is concerned about the amount of windfall profits which are falling into the laps of mainly former British Rail managers who were involved in several buy-out schemes during privatisation.

But the Government has no legislation to prevent it and will not act retrospectively. Mr Prescott said he had asked Mr O'Brien to make sure that there was a "significant passenger dividend in any future takeover of a train-operating company. We must make sure the passenger gets the maximum benefit from any future buy-out or takeover deal."

The Thames takeover follows moves earlier this month by the bus and train company FirstGroup, which bought out two rail franchises — Great Western and North West Trains — making millions of several directors. The buy-back by Go-Ahead will give the company greater

control over the trains' business and generate additional benefits from its two franchises in the London region.

The move has been prompted partly by the increasing numbers of people using the railway and the underlying support of the taxpayer through Exchequer grants.

These will dwindle over the next five years as the company reaches the end of its seven-year franchise. The pressure group Save Our Railways said: "Once again, we have the obscene spectacle of managers of privatised companies being

transformed into fat cats, even though they ran a worse service than BR."

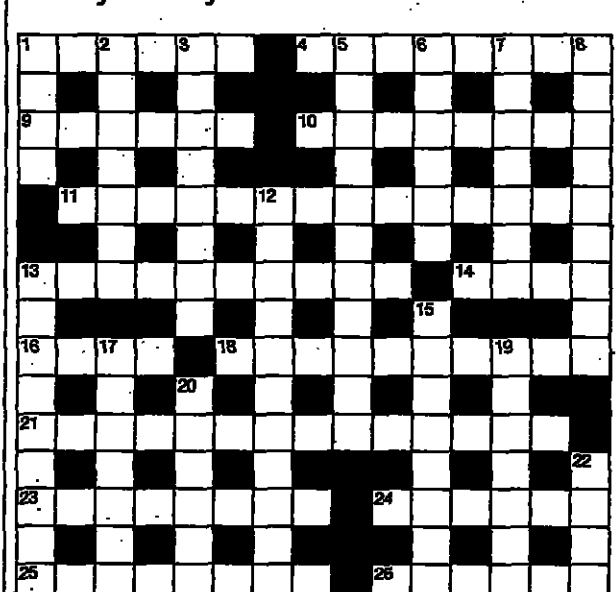
"Rail privatisation is revealed once again as being a quick fix to make a fast buck at the taxpayers' expense."

Its campaign director, Jonathan Bray, attacked Mr O'Brien, saying that while he was in charge, rail managers could relax.

"However bad the service, the cheque has always been in the post. Mr O'Brien has rubber-stamped a deal which will make fortunes for a few, while leaving passengers little better off."

Guardian Crossword No 21,233

Set by Fawley



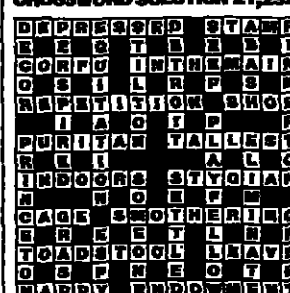
Across

- 1 Mother has request — some kind of rose (6)
- 4 I may be running import/export business (8)
- 5 Having some cognac, ladies recalled TV alien (6)
- 10 Clothes may be odd — orgy's outrageous (8-5)
- 11 Tasse prison staff and be highly persuasive (3,3,6,2)
- 13 Dive, dubious to start with, became disastrously bent (10)
- 14 Grouse as a main course (4)
- 16 Jostle Frenchman in bar, turning round (4)
- 18 Ubiquitous style of carpeting (4-2-4)
- 21 How to use a simple telescope, very easily (4,3,3,4)
- 23 This should stop you encouraging promiscuity (3-5)
- 24 Unruly mob compete to see supporting film (1-5)
- 25 One employed exotic lingerie, mostly to pursue husband (8)
- 26 Extra kinky, and beginning to deprave? (1-5)

Down

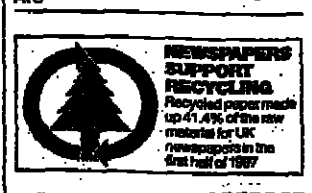
- 1 Bird suddenly lost height over the pond (4)
- 2 Native life-form? (7)
- 3 Turning over a set of articles, noticed second ancient symbol (8)
- 5 Reclaim repaired toy — a faithful representation? (7,4)
- 6 Made jokes or kept silent (5)

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Safety officials threaten to prosecute Railtrack

RAILTRACK has been threatened with criminal prosecution for failing to complete £3 million of repairs on eight miles of the main-line track between Nottingham and Chesterfield, the Health and Safety Executive confirmed last night, writes Keith Harper.

The company has been given until the end of the month to repair 10 problem areas which are intensively used by Midland Mainline and Central Trains passenger services as well as freight trains.

A commitment by Railtrack to replace rotten sleepers and loose fittings

on the 90mph stretch of line has not been honoured.

Chris Hall, the HSE's chief inspector of railways in the Midlands, said: "We would never have had this in the days of British Rail. Railtrack has been in business for four years. It is not acceptable to have so many long-term speed restric-

tions because it is almost inevitable that an accident will occur from driver error sooner or later."

The HSE felt there was a "sufficiently serious risk" to the public and train crews to take action. A host of temporary speed restrictions had become almost permanent, Mr Hall said.

Railtrack said last night that the work would be completed on time. It accepted that the line was in poor condition but blamed that on years of under-investment.

The HSE has sweeping powers which it rarely uses. Enforcements are increasing, however. The

first such action related to the entire Euston station lay-out and two miles of track. The second came after the derailment of a freight train at Bexley, south London, where Railtrack and its contractors face a fine of thousands of pounds for not repairing faulty track.

John Prescott